

Towser Takes First Prize!



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NO. 136

VOL. 5.

Grand Long
Complete
Tale.

A Tale of the Terrible Three.

by
MARTIN
CLIFFORD.



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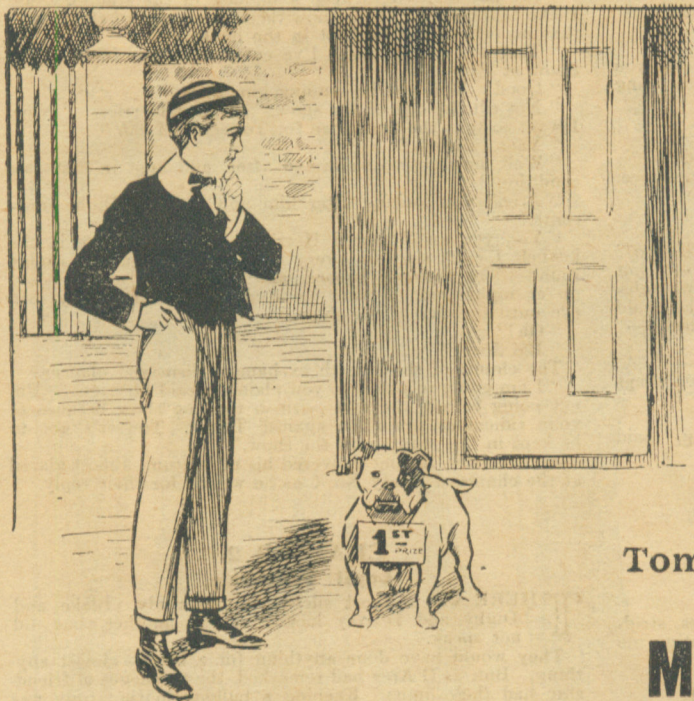
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CHAPTER 1.

Herries Puts It Plainly.

"I WANT to put it plainly to you fellows," said Herries. Herries stood in Study No. 6 in the School House at St. Jim's. He stood on the hearthrug, with his back to the grate, and his hands in his trousers' pockets, and a determined expression was on his face.

Herries looked as if he meant business. His chums in No. 6 Study—Jack Blake, Digby, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—were talking football. They looked round at Herries in some surprise.

Herries, as a rule, was not assertive. He was generally content to take a back seat, in his calm, quiet way. There was only one subject he ever got excited upon, and that was the subject of his dog, Towser. Wherever Towser was concerned, Herries was a different Herries. His faith in Towser was really touching; but, much as they liked their chum, Blake and Digby and D'Arcy could not bring themselves to stand Towser. Towser was the limit.

"I want to put it plainly to you," said Herries, meeting the surprised glances of his chums with a touch of defiance.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Go it!" said Blake. "What's the trouble, old man? Get it off your chest."

"Yes, rather!" assented Digby. "What's up? Don't you agree with what we've just been saying about Tom Merry's footer?"

"Eh?" said Herries.

"Tom Merry is about the best centre-forward we could get for the junior team, not excepting Blake," said Digby.

"Blake says so himself."

"Certainly!" said Blake.

HERRIES' FIRST PRIZE!

A Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

— BY —

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Football! Centre-forward!" said Herries vaguely. "Who's talking about football?"

"Why, we were."

"Oh, were you! I didn't notice."

"Bai Jove!"

The chums simply stared at Herries. He spoke as if football were a subject of very little moment. Herries was a very reliable half in the junior team in the School House, and as keen a footballer as a lad need be. It was natural for Blake and Digby and D'Arcy to be surprised.

"You didn't notice," said Blake.

"No."

"What's the matter with you?"

"Matter! Nothing!"

"I'm afraid that Hewwies is wathah off his wockah, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, groping for his eyeglass to take a closer look at his chum.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Cheeso it, then!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass," said D'Arcy. "Before this mattah goes any furthah, I want it to be plainly undahstood that I wefuse to be called an ass. There are limits to the pwivileges of fwiefndship, and they stop shore of callin' a fellow an ass."

"But Herries didn't call you an ass," said Blake soothingly. "He only asked you not to be one, which was useless."

"Weally, Blake—"

A DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY NEXT THURSDAY.

"I think you might let me speak," said Herries crossly.

"I said I was going to put it plainly to you fellows."

"Yaas. Go on, deah boy!"

"I'm a plain chap," said Herries, with another touch of defiance. "You all know that."

Arthur Augustus took a careful survey of Herries through his eyeglass.

"Yaas, wathah, you are!" he agreed. "But we couldn't think of thwovin' it in your face, deah boy. A fellow can't help his looks."

Herries turned pink, and Blake and Digby roared.

"You utter ass!" said Herries.

"Weally Hewwies!"

"I mean I'm a plain speaker, and I don't beat about the bush," said Herries. "I'm going to put it to you plainly."

"Put what?" asked Blake.

"It," said Digby—"it! Don't you know what 'it' is? It's a personal pronoun, third person singular—"

"Oh, ring off!" said Herries. "It's about Towser."

And in one voice his three chums said:

"Towser!"

"Yes," said Herries. "I'm going to put it to you plainly. I've thought over it a lot, and now we're going to have it out."

"Are you talking about a tooth?"

"Tooth, no!"

"Oh, you said you were going to have it out, and—"

"Don't rot!" roared Herries, getting pinker in the face.

"I tell you it's got to be settled."

"What, Towser?"

"Yes."

"Bai Jove, I should be glad for Towsah to be settled," said D'Arcy. "I am vevy fond of dogs, as a wule, but Towsah has no respect whatever for a fellow's twosahs. I don't want Towsah to be hurt, of course, but if he could be painlessly extractd—I mean painlessly ddowned—"

"You chump!"

"Weally, Hewwies, you said he was to be settled—"

"I mean the matter is to be settled, fathead! You chaps have got an absurd prejudice against Towser."

"Not at all," said Blake.

"A rotten, unfounded dislike of a jolly good dog," said Herries warmly.

Blake shook his head.

"I haven't," he said.

Herries thawed a little.

"You haven't a dislike of Towser?"

"Not an unfounded one," said Blake sweetly.

Herries snorted.

"If you chaps can't be serious—"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"I won't say any more about it!" shouted Herries, striding towards the door. "I—I don't think you're treating me in a chummy way, that's all."

He flung open the door of the study.

The three Fourth-Formers stared a moment blankly.

Then it rushed upon them that Herries was really in a temper.

In a moment Blake jumped up, and he grasped Herries by the shoulders as he was striding through the doorway, and swung him back into the study. D'Arcy and Digby caught hold of him at the same moment, and Herries was swung right into the room.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Let me go!"

"Rats!" said Blake severely. "What do you mean by getting your rag out in this way? Isn't it forbidden to get into a temper in the study? Haven't we arranged long ago that all our rows were to be outside the family circle?"

"Yaas, wathah."

"I should think so," said Digby. "Herries, old man, you're a bounder."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Look here—"

"Now, don't get ratty, old man," said Blake, tapping Herries affectionately on the nose. "Keep your temper, and don't let your angry passions rise. What's the trouble? You're not ass enough to mind a little fun, I suppose."

"Wathah not, Hewwies, I hope."

"Well," said Herries. "I wish you'd be serious on a serious subject, that's all, and I want to have it settled about Towser."

"My dear chap, that was only our fun; we all like Towser," said Blake blandly. "Even D'Arcy would miss him if he were shot."

"If it were D'Arcy who shot him, that's true enough," murmured Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Keep your wool on," said Blake gently. "Now, then, what's the trouble with Towser? I hope he's not ill."

"Weally, Dig—"

"Now, look here, that's not asking too much, Gussy."

"You uttah ass—"

"Cheese it! It's Herries turn to jaw. Now, go ahead, Herries, old man, and let us have it plainly, whatever 'it' is."

"It's about Towser."

"Go ahead!"

"You chaps have a silly prejudice about Towser."

"H'm! Go on!"

"You don't like him in the study."

"It's not allowed to keep a bulldog in the studies," said Blake cautiously. "You know there's an order of the Head's that no pets are to be kept in the house."

"This is a special case. I've entered Towser for the Dog Show at Rylecombe."

"Good! Will you be sending him there?"

"Not till the day of the show," snapped Herries. "Now, I want to take the first prize for Towser, if I can."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, he's got to be looked after, and kept in first-class condition."

"Aren't you looking after him now?" asked Digby innocently.

"Yes, you ass!" roared Herries. "But out there in the kennels I can't see him every minute, and I have to dodge round there between lessons, and then the place is closed up at night, too. I want to keep Towser under my own eye until the day of the show."

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

The chums of the Fourth exchanged dismayed glances.

"I am going to put it to you plainly," said Herries. "I'm not going to lose the first prize in the dog show because of your ridiculous prejudice against Towser. Towser's got to be kept in this study until the show."

And Herries, having delivered his ultimatum, almost glared at the chums of Study No. 6 as he waited for their reply.

CHAPTER 2.

Loyal Friendship.

THERE was a short silence in the study. Blake and Digby and D'Arcy looked at one another, but did not speak.

They would have done anything for a chum—almost anything. But, as D'Arcy had remarked, the privileges of friendship had their limits. Keeping a bulldog in the study was one of the limits.

Towser certainly had no respect for a fellow's trousers, just as D'Arcy said. He had a fancy, too, for gnawing up books and papers, and in his frisky moments he had been known to reduce to tatters a carpet and a pair of curtains. If trodden on, he would growl in a blood-curdling, hair-raising way, if he did not bite; and he was always being trodden on when he was in a room. He would go to sleep under your chair with his head just by your feet, or he would calmly stretch himself in slumber just inside the doorway in the dark. Altogether, Towser was a trial, and the Head's order that no pets were to be kept in the studies, though it had caused fierce discontent among some of the fellows, had come as a boon and a blessing to Blake and Digby and D'Arcy. They had been fed up with Towser, and they lived in constant dread that Towser would be fed up with them.

D'Arcy broke the painful silence.

"Bai Jove!" he remarked.

That was D'Arcy's contribution to the decision. It did not solve the difficulty.

"Well?" said Herries, at last.

"H'm!" said Blake.

"H'm!" said Digby.

"You see, it's a rather important dog show," went on Herries, a little eagerly. "Dogs will be there from all parts. We have to pay an entrance-fee, and it's divided up in prizes. I expect to rope in three or four pounds for Towser."

"Bai Jove!"

"There is a first prize for the best kept, best conditioned, and handsomest dog—"

"Handsomest!" murmured Blake.

"Yes," said Herries firmly. "Handsomest! That's where



"Et tu, Brute!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "Thou too, Brutus! My hat, as Julius Cæsar said when they jabbed him, I think everybody at St. Jim's is entering for that blessed bow-wow show!" (See Page 8.)

Towser will come out strong. You mayn't have noticed it, but there are very few bulldogs just like Towser."

"I'm sure of it, old fellow."

Herries looked at him suspiciously.

"Well, you'll see that it's important to keep Towser under my eye. I want to have him in the study till the dog show."

"But it's not allowed," said Blake feebly. "The Head's order—"

"That's all right, if I get the House-master's permission."

"But Mr. Railton won't give it."

"I've asked him already," said Herries triumphantly.

"He says there's no objection, on a special occasion like this, if my study mates don't object."

Blake and Digby and D'Arcy looked at one another hopelessly.

They felt that they were caught.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Herries bluntly. "I suppose you're not going to stand in the way of my getting the first prize?"

"N-n-no!"

"Wathah not."

"H'm!"

"I thought I could depend on you when it came to the pinch," said Herries; "but I don't want to force Towser

on you, you know. I want you to say right out that you'd rather I kept him in the study till the dog show."

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"That's it," said Herries. "Now I've put it plainly to you. You admit that your prejudice against Towser is silly and unreasonable, and that a study is much more—more homelike with a dog in it, don't you?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Now, what do you say?"

D'Arcy's face brightened up. A brilliant idea had occurred to the swell of St. Jim's. He jammed his monocle into his eye again.

"Bai Jove, I've got an ideah!" he ejaculated.

"Whose is it?" asked Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"About accommodating Towser," said Herries. "We could arrange a big basket—"

"Pway listen to my ideah, deah boys. It is an easy and perfectly satisfactory way out of the difficulty."

"Go ahead, Gussy. Out of the mouths of babes and duffers—"

"Pway wing off, Blake! Look here, Hewwies, you expect to make four pounds as a first prize in the dog show!"

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Another Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.

NEXT THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL"

"About that."

"Well, suppose we had a whip-wound, and waised four pounds, and pwsented it to you in the form of a testimonial. You would get your four pounds, and we should be saved the howwidness of havin' Towser in the studay. I should wegard that as cheap at four pounds."

Herries glared.

"You—you chump!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You frabjous ass!"

"Weally!"

"You burbling duffer!"

"I fail to see the weason for these oppwobwious we-marks. I wegard my ideah as bein' a vevy good one."

"Look here!" roared Herries. "Am I going to have Towser in this studay, or am I not going to have Towser in this studay? That's what I want to know."

"Oh, all right," said Blake resignedly. "You can have him in."

"Certainly!" said Digby.

"Oh, yaas, wathah, if you insist upon it, deah boy."

Herries softened.

"You'll get to like it as soon as you're used to him," he said. "A studay is more like home with a dog in it. Then, if anything's lost, Towser will track it out. You know what a wonderful tracker Towser is."

"H'm! Yes!"

"Look here, Blake, you know jolly well we'll—"

"Of course I do," said Blake. "Didn't I say so."

Herries looked suspicious.

"Well, that's settled, then," he said. "I'll get a basket for Towser to sleep in, and I can keep his biscuits and meat in a box here. D'Arcy's hatbox would do."

"Bai Jove, if you touch my hatbox—"

"Oh, all right, if you're going to start by making difficulties, I'll get something else," said Herries. "Anything for a quiet life. Now that the matter's settled, I may as well go and fetch Towser."

And Herries quitted the studay.

The three chums exchanged hopeless glances.

"Well, we couldn't refuse," said Blake.

"Wathah not; but it will be howwid!"

"Horrid isn't the word!" said Digby.

"Never mind," said Blake heroically. "A chap is called upon to make sacrifices for friendship. We can stand it."

"Ye-e-es."

Tom Merry's cheerful face looked in at the open door. The hero of the Shell stared in surprise at the downcast countenances of the Fourth-Formers.

"Hallo, what's the trouble?" he asked. "Anything wrong?"

"Oh, no; only Herries has entered Towser in a dog show."

"Well, what's the matter with that?"

"Nothing; only he's going to keep him in the studay till the show, to look after him."

Tom Merry burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Blake snorted.

"Oh, cheese it!" he exclaimed. "It's not a laughing matter, whatever it is."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Tom Merry.

With one accord the chums of the Fourth rushed at him. Tom Merry dodged out of the studay, and dashed along the passage. After him went Blake and D'Arcy and Digby glad of somebody to avenge themselves upon. Tom Merry ran into the Shell passage at top speed, and there was a collision at the corner, and a wild yell.

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry.

He threw his arms round the person he had run into, and they rolled on the linoleum together. The next moment Blake and Digby and D'Arcy were piling on them.

CHAPTER 3.

A Row with the Outsider.

"HANG you!"

"Oh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Phew!"

"Hang you! You did that on purpose!"

A junior scrambled out from under the heap, dusty and dishevelled, and in a raging temper. Tom Merry sat on the linoleum, panting. D'Arcy sat opposite to him, groping feebly for his eyeglass. Blake was leaning against the wall, and Digby was sprawling on the floor at full length, and both had bellows to mend. The youth Tom Merry had run

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL."

Another Splendid Long, Complete
School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.

into stood gasping and panting, and his eyes flamed with rage as they were turned upon the hero of the Shell.

"You did that on purpose!" he roared.

It was Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, generally known at St. Jim's as the "Outsider," and a rank outsider he was, too, in most matters.

He had a savage temper, although he could keep it under perfect control when it suited him. It did not suit him just at present, evidently.

Tom Merry blinked at him. He was too dazed by the sudden collision to do anything else yet.

"You rotter!" howled Lumley-Lumley.

"Eh?"

"You cad!"

"What?"

"You waster!"

"Which?"

The Outsider almost foamed at the mouth. His epithets did not make Tom Merry turn a hair.

In his rage, he lifted his boot, and launched it at the hero of the Shell, who was sitting on the floor within easy reach.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "Look out!"

But Tom Merry was looking out.

It was a savage, spiteful kick, and if it had reached its mark, it would certainly have hurt Tom Merry.

But the junior twisted out of the way just in time, and Lumley's foot crashed upon the wall instead, with a terrific shock.

Lumley gave a wild roar.

If the boot had struck Tom Merry, that would have been one thing; but striking the hard, unyielding surface of the wall was quite another.

Lumley staggered back, on one leg, and he clasped his foot in both hands, with almost a sob of pain.

"Ow-wow-wow!" he groaned. "I've broken my toes, I believe."

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Blake.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Tom Merry scrambled to his feet.

"Serve you jolly well right, you rotten cad!" he exclaimed indignantly. "You were trying to kick me, you—

you worm."

"Ow, ow!"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I should wecommend you to give him a feahful thwashin', Tom Mewwy, deah boy."

Tom clenched his hands hard.

"I would if he hadn't hurt himself enough," he said.

"Of all the cowardly, rotten tricks—"

"You ran into me!" groaned Jerrold.

"That was an accident."

"It's a lie!"

Tom Merry's eyes blazed. He advanced upon the Outsider of St. Jim's with his hands clenched hard.

"Take that back!" he exclaimed imperiously.

Lumley-Lumley stared at him doggedly. He was still twisting with the pain in his foot, and he was in the vilest temper possible.

"I won't," he replied.

"Then put up your hands."

"Bah!"

"I ran into you by accident," said Tom Merry, his voice trembling with anger. "It was a bit thoughtless, bolting round a corner like that, I'll admit; but no fellow except you would doubt my word on the subject."

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"I said it was a lie," he replied.

"You'll take it back again."

"Rats!"

"Then take that!"

And Tom Merry hit out.

Lumley warded the blow clumsily. He was no boxer, though of late he had been taking lessons in the manly art of self-defence, and he had improved considerably since he had been at St. Jim's.

The blow missed his chest, and caught him on the nose, and he staggered back.

The next moment he flung himself upon Tom Merry.

He was clawing like a wild cat, and the Shell fellow had all his work cut out to keep off the scratching fingers.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "What a wild beast!"

"The rotter!" said Blake. "That was what he gave me the day he came here. I thought he was learning civilised ways."

"Not much," said Digby. "He won't learn. Why the Head doesn't sack him from the school is a mystery to me."

The three Fourth-Formers had quite forgotten by this time that they had bolted along the passage in pursuit of Tom Merry.

They stood along the wall, and watched the contest between the Shell fellow and the Outsider.

Lumley-Lumley had no chance.

He scratched Tom Merry's hands chiefly, and in return he received crash after crash upon the nose and the chest.

He dropped at last, gasping and breathless, on the floor of the passage.

"Had enough?" asked Tom Merry grimly.

"Oh!" gasped Lumley.

"I should recommend you to learn to fight like a Christian, and not like a blessed wild beast," said Tom Merry scornfully. "Also, to keep from insulting a fellow you can't stand up to for two minutes."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley rose to his feet. His face was black with rage.

"You score over me now," he said. "My time will come."

"Rats!"

"You are a wottah to bear malice, Lumley," said Arthur Augustus, wagging an admonishing finger at the Outsider of the Fourth Form. "I wegard you as an uttah wottah. I—"

Smack!

D'Arcy was suddenly interrupted.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's open palm smote him upon the face with a crack like a pistol-shot, and the swell of St. Jim's staggered back against the wall.

The next instant there was a clatter of running feet, and Jerrold Lumley was gone.

D'Arcy stared after him dazedly, and rubbed his face.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped.

"The cowardly hound!" shouted Blake.

"Gweat Scott! He's gone!"

The juniors were silent with astonishment and anger, for the moment. That a fellow should strike another, and then bolt at top speed before the blow could be returned, was something new to them. They had not expected it even of Jerrold Lumley-Lumley, the rank outsider.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry, at last. "That chap is the limit, and no mistake!"

"He's miles beyond the limit," said Blake—"miles! If I hadn't seen him, I wouldn't have believed in him really."

"Bai Jove, no!"

Tom Merry looked at his hands. They were bleeding in several places where the Outsider's nails had scratched. There was a streak of red on his cheek, too.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, rubbing his crimson cheek. "I shall give that wottah a feahful thwashin'! The only thing that wovwies me is, wethah it is too humiliatin' to touch the awful boundah at all."

"I think I'll go and bathe my hands," said Tom Merry shortly. "I've never had a tussle with a chap like that before. My hat! This is something new for St. Jim's."

He went on his way, and the chums of the Fourth returned to Study No. 6, where they found Herries with Towser. The bulldog was already installed in the study, and he greeted the returning juniors with a growl that, in spite of Herries's assurances on the subject, did not make the place appear any more cosy and home-like.

CHAPTER 4.

Arthur Augustus Refuses:

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

Manners and Lowther, Tom Merry's chums in the Shell, greeted him with these exclamations as he entered his study in the Shell passage. Tom Merry had bathed his hands and his face, but it was useless to attempt to remove the signs of the scratches. As a matter of fact, they seemed to show up more vividly after the washing.

Manners and Lowther spotted them at once. Manners even laid down the camera he was busy with, to stare.

"How on earth did you get like that?" demanded Lowther.

"Like what?" asked Tom Merry.

"That!"

"Isn't my tie straight?"

"I'm not talking about your tie."

"My hair ruffled—"

"Blow your hair!"

"Lowther means your hands," said Manners. "How did you get them like that? Have you been after the roses in the Head's garden?"

"No," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Been chivvying a cat?" demanded Lowther severely. "That's not like you, Tommy, and I can't have you starting these things like Mellish."

Tom Merry looked indignant.

"Don't be an ass, Lowther."

"Well, where did you gather up those scratches?" demanded Lowther. "You're not a married man, and you've no right to go about in a scratched state."

"Oh, I got scratched!"

"Out with it!" said Manners. "None of your giddy secrets here!"

"Well, I've had a bit of a row with Lumley," said Tom Merry reluctantly. "I don't want to talk about it. It's rotten."

"I should say it is rotten," said Lowther, taking Tom Merry's hands and looking at them. "Why, he's been scratching you like a blessed cat."

"Oh, it'll get well again!"

"That's not the question. It's the principle of the thing. The rotter has got to be taught that he can't fight like that at St. Jim's."

"What-ho!" said Manners.

"Oh, let him alone!" said Tom Merry, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I don't want to have a hand in ragging him, and it would want a lot of ragging to cure him of being a rank rotter, too."

"He ought to be had up before the whole Lower School," said Monty Lowther, "and made an example of. Hallo! What's that?"

Tom Merry listened.

"Scott! That's Towser!"

There was a sound of fierce growling along the passage. Then a sudden, sharp bark, and a wild yelping.

"Pongo!" roared Manners.

"Both the beasts in the house at once!" exclaimed Lowther. "Why, Railton will be down on them like a load of bricks."

Bow-wow-wow!

Gr-r-r-r-r!

Tom Merry ran along the passage, and Manners and Lowther followed him. They knew that the alarming sounds proceeded from Study No. 6, and they were curious to know what was going on. Tom Merry explained what he had heard as to Towser's future residence in the study.

The chums of the Shell chuckled over it. Towser in the house always meant trouble.

They reached the door of Blake's study.

It was open, and a youth of the Third Form stood there. It was D'Arcy minor—Wally D'Arcy, the younger brother of the elegant Arthur Augustus. His collar was soiled, his hair was ruffled, and his fingers were inky. That was D'Arcy minor's usual state. Arthur Augustus never could make him tidy. Wally was holding a shaggy mongrel in his arms, and Towser was walking round him, yapping up at the mongrel, who barked defiance from his safe perch.

"If you don't chain that wild beast of yours up, Herries, I'll shoot him," said Wally, in tense, impassioned tones, as the Terrible Three came up.

Herries snorted.

"Towser's all right, only he doesn't like mongrels. Take that thing of yours out of the study, and Towser will be quite quiet."

"Hang Towser!" said Wally irritably.

"Take that mongrel out."

"Take that growling beast away."

"Look here—"

"Look here—"

"You cheeky young sweep—"

"You ass!"

"Pway be quiet, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What have you brougth that beast to this studay for, Wally?"

"I came to speak to you."

"Gre-e-r-r-r!"

"Keep that beast away, Herries."

"Oh, rats!"

"I wish this were my study," sighed Tom Merry. "So quiet—so peaceful—"

"So Arcadian!" murmured Lowther.

"Oh, shut up!" said Blake crossly. "Between Towser and Pongo, life won't be worth living with a Shell duffer being funny."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Wally kicked out at Towser, who growled and retreated, still with a bloodshot eye fixed upon Pongo. Pongo yapped and snapped from the Third-Former's arms.

"Why don't you take that thing away?" roared Herries. "He's not going till I go, and I've come here to speak to Gussy," said Wally.

"Have you seen Lumlay?" asked D'Arcy.

"Lumley! No."

"I am goin' to look for Lumlay—"

"Oh, blow Lumlay! Look here, I'm entering Pongo for the Dog Show—"

"What!" exclaimed Herries.

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NEXT THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL."

"The Rylcombe Dog Show, this week," said Wally calmly. "I haven't paid the entrance fee yet. It's five bob."

"Weally, Wally—"

"Five bob isn't much, for I'm bound to carry off the first prize of four quid, for the best kept and handsomest dog at the show."

"Wally—"

"I'm short of tin. I want five bob at once, Gussy."

"I wefuse—"

"I hope you're not going to be mean. I shall lose the prize if I don't get the five bob now. To-day's the last day for paying up."

"Wally—"

"So hand over the five bob and I'll clear."

"I wefuse—"

"Look here, you're my major, and you're bound to help," said Wally indignantly. "I hope you're not growing into a rotten miser."

"I wefuse—"

"What do you think of that chap?" exclaimed Wally, exasperated. "Refuses his own minor a loan of five bob—"

"Nothin' of the sort. I—"

"Well, hand it over, then."

"I wefuse—"

"Don't be mean, Gussy."

"No, don't be mean," said Tom Merry solemnly. "Be warned in time, Gussy, and don't grow mean in your old age."

"Weally Tom Mewwy—"

"Fork it out, and let the young bounder clear, and get that mongrel away," said Blake; "the other beast won't be quiet till he's gone."

"Look here—" began Herries.

"Hand it over, Gus!"

"Weally, Wally—"

"You can have it back out of the first prize. It's four quid, you know, and I only want five bob now."

"I wefuse—"

"Oh, all right, I'll borrow it of Tom Merry, then."

"You misundahstand me, Wallay. I wefuse to allow you to use such an extremely slangy expvession as quids and bobs. I shall have great pleasure in lending you five shillings, if you like."

Wally grunted.

"I might have known you were only playing the giddy goat," he exclaimed. "Hand over the boblets."

"Weally, Wally—"

"Fork them out!"

"What a dweadfully vulgah expvession, Wally."

"Br-r-r! Hand 'em over; ladle out the spondulics!"

D'Arcy gasped. He counted out five shillings into his minor's inky hand.

"Your fingahs are vewy inky, Wally," he remarked.

"So would yours be, if you'd upset a bottle of ink over them, fathead."

"I wefuse to be called a fathead. I—"

"Well, chump, then," said Wally, slipping the five shillings into his pocket. "I'm awfully obliged, Gus, and you shall have it back out of the first prize at the dog show, honest Injun."

"You young ass!" exclaimed Herries. "Do you really imagine that you are going to get a prize in the dog show?"

Wally stared at him.

"Yes, rather," he said emphatically.

"What breed is that thing?" asked Herries.

"Never mind his breed," said Wally, with a sniff. "He's got more breed in him than that tripehound of yours, anyway. Besides, it's not a question of breed. There's a special prize for the best kept and handsomest dog."

The chums gazed at Pongo.

How Wally could possibly imagine that he was either a well-kept or handsome dog passed their comprehension. But no one is so blind as the owner of a dog.

"Towser's going to take that prize, as well as some others," said Herries warmly.

"Towser."

"Yes, Towser."

Wally looked down at Towser.

"Well kept!" he murmured.

"Well, isn't he?"

"Handsome?"

"Look here—"

"Do you call that a dog?" asked Wally, politely, pointing a scornful forefinger at the handsome and well-kept Towser.

That question was too much for Herries. He jumped up and made for Wally, and Wally edged to the door. Pongo made an effort just at that moment, and slipped from his arms. The next instant Towser was upon him.

"Look out!" shouted Tom Merry.

With a shrill yelp, Pongo darted out of the study, with Towser after him. Wally and Herries, equally alarmed

for their favourites, rushed in pursuit. Tom Merry gave a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! If they kill one another—"

"Bai Jove, it would be a jolly good thing," exclaimed D'Arcy, "if Pongo kills Towsah, and Towsah kills Pongo! I should be greatly inclined to award each of them a special pwize, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three followed Herries and Wally, but they did not find them. The two dogs had disappeared, and the owners were hunting them in different directions.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "I think Blake is going to have a lively time with Towser; and if Wally also brings Pongo into the house to be taken special care of, there will be a lot of trouble in the family."

To which Manners and Lowther assented.

Jack Blake was thinking the same, and so was Digby. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was looking very thoughtful, and gnawing the handle of his pen.

"Well, thinking it out about Towser?" asked Blake, at last.

D'Arcy started.

"Towsah! No, deah boy. I had forgotten Towsah. I was thinkin' about Lumley-Lumley."

"Oh, never mind him."

"You forget that he has stwuck me, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, in his most stately manner. "It is impos. for a D'Arcy to be stwuck without pwopably wesentin' the affwont."

"Yes, I forgot that," said Blake solemnly. "I suppose it's a case of coffee and pistols for two."

"Pway don't be an ass!"

"Of course, it's necessary for you to call him out. I will act for you with pleasure, and if you perish, you can rely upon me to see that your gold watch is presented to your best chum, Jack Blake, Esquire."

"I wish you would be sewious, Blake. I am goin' to give Lumley a feahful thwashin', and I weally think I ought to go and look for him."

"Oh, leave it till the prep.'s done, and we'll help," said Blake. "Lumley will spoil your beauty, though, if he scratches you."

"I shall insist upon his fightin' decently."

"Lot of good that will be."

"In any case, I am bound to thwash him. It is a question of personal dig. with me now."

"In that case," said Jack Blake, with due solemnity, "there's nothing more to be said. Let's get the prep. done, and then we'll hunt the slipper—I mean, hunt the kipper—that is to say, the bounder."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And prep. being finished in Study No. 6, the chums prepared to look for Lumley-Lumley. Herries came in, looking tired and cross. Towser was not with him.

"Where's Towsy?" asked Blake.

"Blessed if I know. He's dodged me!"

"Why didn't you whistle him?"

"Oh, Towser's not one of those tame animals that come and go at a whistle," said Herries disdainfully.

Blake chuckled.

"Are you coming with us to look for Lumley?" he asked.

"Oh, blow Lumley!"

And Blake and Digby left Herries in the study, when they started to look for the Outsider of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 5.

Looking for Lumley.

"LUMLEY!"

"Lumley-Lumley!"

"The Outsider!"

"Where is he?"

"Have you seen him?"

Three juniors went up and down and to and fro in St. Jim's, asking the question. The Outsider seemed to have disappeared.

D'Arcy was determined to find him, and Blake and Digby allowed themselves to be dragged up and down in the search.

D'Arcy explained that it was impossible for a D'Arcy to be struck without avenging the affront, and Blake admitted it, but suggested that D'Arcy should say "stricken," as more grammatically correct—a suggestion which brought only a sniff from the swell of St. Jim's.

But vengeance simply had to be postponed. Since the moment when Lumley-Lumley had struck, or stricken, D'Arcy, and bolted down the passage, he seemed to have vanished from the sight of all.

His chum and study-mate, Mellish, was asked where he was, but Mellish professed not to know.



"Stop him!" shouted Tom Merry. (See page 23.)

D'Arcy fixed his monocle upon the cad of the Fourth, and gave him a very searching glance.

"You are such a feahful fabwicatah, you know," he remarked. "I shouldn't wonder if you know all the time, you know."

Mellish sneered.

"You can believe me or not, as you like," he remarked. "I haven't seen Lumley for some time. What do you want with him?"

"I want to give him a feahful thwashin'."

"Oh, what a pity he doesn't know! And he would be bound to come rushing up," said Mellish sarcastically. "But perhaps you might get the thrashing, you know."

"I wefuse to think anythin' of the sort, Mellish. As I cannot find Lumley, I weally think I had bettah give you a lickin— Bai Jove, he's gone!"

"Better give it up," said Blake.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon him.

"What do you suggest, Blake, deah boy?"

"Better give it up. Leave Lumley to his conscience," suggested Blake.

"Wats!"

"You see, we're getting fagged," said Digby.

"More wats!"

"Now, don't be a chump!"

"You fellows can go and eat coke. I'm goin' to find Lumley," said Arthur Augustus. "It is imposs. for a D'Arcy to west until an insult to his personal dig. has been avenged."

Blake grunted.

"Oh, we'd better come with you, or you'll be getting into some mischief," he said.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Here's Tom Merry! Tom Merry! Ahoy!"

Tom Merry was coming downstairs with Lowther and Manners. The Terrible Three stopped as Blake hailed them.

"Have you seen Lumley?" asked Blake.

"No, not since we saw him in the passage. You don't want him?"

"Oh, no; but D'Arcy wants to avenge his dig," explained Blake. "It seems that when a D'Arcy is struck, or stricken, it is impossible for him to repose until he has avenged his honour. This is worth knowing, you know, as a curious fact in the natural history of the species D'Arcy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"D'Arcy can't rest, and won't let us rest, until he has slain the Outsider, so we want to get the slaying over," said

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"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL."

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Digby. "Any information leading to the discovery of the fugitive will be thankfully received."

"I wish you would be serious, Dig."

"I don't know where Lumley is, but we'll help you look for him," said Tom Merry. "He ought to be found and squashed, and Gussy is just the chap to do it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The sooner Gussy finds him, and strews the hungry churchyard with his bones, the sooner he will be put out of his misery," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah!"

"You might wait a minute while I fetch my camera," said Manners.

D'Arcy did not wait a minute. He walked off in high dudgeon, with his nose in the air. The chums of the School House followed, grinning.

They asked all whom they met for news of the Outsider, but Lumley-Lumley was keeping very close. He was not in his study, and not in the junior common-room, nor yet in the Form-room. Box-room and passages were drawn blank.

In the dusky quad, he was not to be found, and in the gym, he was conspicuous by his absence. The juniors began to be rather tired of the hunt, but Arthur Augustus seemed tireless.

Skimpole of the Shell was discovered in the gym., working out a problem with the aid of a pencil and paper. Tom Merry tapped him on the shoulder, and Skimpole started and blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"Oh, is that you, Merry? Very good. Can you tell me this—taking it for granted that the human race originated in a speck of jelly floating in a primeval sea—"

Tom Merry shook the scientific genius of the Shell till his spectacles slid down his nose, and he gasped for breath.

"Never mind the primeval seas now," said Tom Merry. "Have you seen Lumley?"

"Yes, I saw him at breakfast this morning. Taking it for granted that—"

"Ass! I mean lately."

"No, not lately. Taking it for granted, I say, that the human race originated in a speck of jelly floating in a primeval sea, and that some millions of years were required for the evolution of the human body into its present form, and taking into consideration the undoubted fact that this stretches the human race back into the glacial period, when organic life was impossible on this planet, how do you account—"

"I don't," said Tom Merry.

"Eh!"

The juniors walked away, leaving Skimpole wrestling with his problem. Three youths belonging to the Shell came into the gym, together, chatting and laughing. They were Harry Noble, or Kangaroo, and Clifton Dane and Bernard Glyn, the chums of the end study. They were chuckling over some topic which seemed to interest them very much. Tom Merry called to them, and they stopped.

"Have you seen Lumley?"

"Lumley?" said Bernard Glyn. "No."

"What's the joke?" asked Blake.

"Joke!"

"Yes. What are you cackling about?"

"Cackling!"

"Ass! What is it?"

"Oh, nothing! I'm entering for the first prize at the Rylcombe Dog Show, that's all!"

"Et tu, Brute!" exclaimed Blake. "Thou, too, Brutus! My hat, as Julius Cæsar said when they jabbed him—I think everybody at St. Jim's is entering for that blessed bow-wow show!"

"Oh, any others?" asked the Liverpool lad.

"Yes; Herries and young Wally."

"Oh! I rather think my dog will waltz off with the prize."

"Your dog!" said Monty Lowther. "I didn't think you had one."

"I haven't."

"Then how the dickens—"

"I'm going to have one this evening."

"Oh, good! Where are you going to keep it?"

"In the study."

"Not allowed."

"Oh, my dog will be allowed in the study!" grinned Glyn, and he looked at his two comrades, who burst into a roar.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at them in surprise.

"Blessed if I quite catch on," said Digby.

"You wouldn't," said Kangaroo. "You'll see in time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Kangaroo & Co. walked away, still laughing, leaving the other juniors considerably puzzled.

"They've got something up their sleeve," said Blake.

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NEXT THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL."

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"Looks like it," agreed Tom Merry. "I noticed them confabing together in the Form-room this afternoon."

"Yaas, but—"

"You don't know what it is, Gussy, do you?"

"No; but—"

"I wonder—"

"But we haven't found Lumley yet," said the swell of St. Jim's.

"My hat, what a badger he is for sticking to this!" said Digby. "Talk about sealing-wax and glue, they're not in it with Gussy!"

"When a D'Arcy is stwuck—"

"Yes, we've heard that before," said Digby. "Put on a new record!"

"Weally, Digby—"

"Hallo, here's Mellish again, and he's looking awfully sly!" exclaimed Lowther. "Mellish, you worm, come here!"

Mellish was just coming from the direction of the woodshed. Instead of answering Monty Lowther's call, he broke into a run, and disappeared towards the School House. Lowther pointed towards the woodshed.

"That's where he's been!" he exclaimed. "I shouldn't wonder if the Outsider's hiding there."

"Let's look!"

"Yaas, wathah! You see, we must find him. When a D'Arcy is stwuck—"

"Come on, then!"

The juniors hurried to the woodshed. Tom Merry pushed open the door and entered. All was dark within.

"Anybody got a match?"

Manners struck a match. Manners was a thoughtful youth, and generally had all little necessities of that sort about him. The match flickered out in the gloom of the woodshed, and glimmered on gardening implements and stacks of faggots.

"Not here," said Manners.

There was a slight sound in the loft above the shed. The juniors uttered a general exclamation.

"He's there!"

D'Arcy stepped to the bottom of the ladder that gave access to the loft.

"Lumley!" he called out.

There was no reply—nothing but the creaking of a board.

"Lumley! I know you're there, you wottah!"

Silence.

"Come down!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Come down, you rat!" yelled Blake.

"I insist upon your comin' down immediately, you wottah! I am goin' to give you a fearful thwashin'."

There was no answer. D'Arcy grew pink with wrath.

"Lumley, if you do not come down immediately, I shall come up and fetch you!" he exclaimed.

Still no reply. Arthur Augustus put his foot upon the ladder to mount.

"Hold on!" said Digby. "He'll have you at a disadvantage if you go up there, Gussy, and you know what a worm he is. Better leave it till he comes down."

"Imposs., deah boy! I have said that I will go up and fetch him if he does not come down, and it is imposs. for a D'Arcy to go back on his word!"

"What I have said I have said," remarked Monty Lowther, screwing a shilling into his eye in imitation of an eyeglass.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners had found a candle-end in a bottle, and lighted it. The shed was dimly illumined. But the loft above was quite dark.

The swell of St. Jim's mounted the first step of the ladder. There was no sound now from the loft. Blake and Digby followed him upon the ladder. Lumley-Lumley was so reek-

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less, and so spiteful, that there was no telling what he might do, and Blake did not mean to let D'Arcy go up alone.

"Come on!" said Tom Merry. "We're all in this. You lead the way, Gussy, and we'll follow!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

D'Arcy mounted the ladder. After him came Blake, then Digby, then Tom Merry, and then Manners and Lowther. They pretty well filled the ladder from top to bottom. By the time Lowther had stepped on the lowest rung, D'Arcy had his head in the orifice of the loft above.

There he paused for a moment. He could not see Lumley, but there was no doubt that Lumley could see him.

"I know you are here, you wottah," said D'Arcy. "I am goin' to thwash you. You attacked me in a cowardly mannah. I am goin' to give you a fair fight, though you do not deserve it. Pway come— Oh!"

Something liquid, soft, warm, sticky, suddenly descended upon the swell of St. Jim's. It smothered him, and swept past him, and swooped upon the other fellows who were following him up the ladder—sticky, and thick, and horrid.

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"Groo!"

"Tar!"

"Yow!"

There was a chuckle from the darkness of the loft. Then the sound of a window opening, and silence. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy staggered on the ladder, lost his hold, and came tumbling down. In a moment more, Tom Merry & Co. were on the floor of the woodshed, looking at one another with faces that were mostly black as the ace of spades.

CHAPTER 6.

Lumley Scores.

"TAR!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Tar! The rotter!"

"The Outsider!"

"Yow! It's horrid!"

"Howwid, deah boys! It's feahful!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

The swell of St. Jim's sat up.

He certainly did look "feahful" in the glimmering light of the candle. His head and face were smothered with tar. He was as black as the ace of spades, and the tar was making thick streams down his clothes.

The others, having been in part sheltered by the swell of St. Jim's, had escaped more lightly, but they were in a most unenviable state.

Their faces were splashed with tar, and Blake was nearly as black as D'Arcy, and their clothes were sticky with it everywhere.

Lumley-Lumley had been very thorough.

Now that it was too late, the juniors understood that the Outsider had deliberately fooled them, and led them on; he had taken refuge in the loft over the woodshed, and Mellish had allowed himself to be seen intentionally—and all the while Lumley had the bucket of tar at the top of the steps ready for his pursuers.

Tom Merry could have kicked himself.

He felt that he might have guessed it, but he had allowed himself to fall quite blindly into the trap.

"My hat!" he groaned.

"Gweat Scott! It's tewwible!"

"I shall never get this off!" grunted Blake. "Oh, Gussy, why didn't they drown you, and keep one of the others?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Poof! I'm tarry from head to foot! Groo!"

"Gerroh! Same here!"

"It's all Gussy's fault."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

Tom Merry staggered to his feet.

"We'd better try and get this off before it sets hard!" he gasped. "It will want some getting off, too!"

"I'm goin' to thwash Lumley!"

"He's not there, ass! I heard the window!"

"Bai Jove! He's got out of the window. I nevah thought of that!"

"Do you ever think of anything?" grunted Blake. "Come on, for goodness' sake!"

"Weally, Blake!"

"Oh, come on!"

The juniors tramped drearily from the woodshed.

It was not only the tar, and the trouble of getting it off, that worried them, though that certainly was bad enough. But they thought of the laughter that would greet their appearance in their present state in the School House.

As they emerged from the woodshed three youths came up with inquiring looks. They peered at the School House juniors in the gloom, and burst into a roar of laughter.

"Figgins & Co.!" grunted Blake. "Of course, we were bound to run into New House bounders at this precise moment!"

"How wotten!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn. "Lumley's just told us that there was something funny to be seen here. He was right."

The chums of the School House tramped past without replying. They were so downcast that they had no words even for their old rivals of the New House.

They hurried as fast as they could towards their own House, leaving Figgins & Co. roaring with laughter. Outside the School House they met Kangaroo, and Dane, and Glyn, also looking inquiring.

"Hallo!" said Kangaroo. "Lumley says My hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dane and Glyn, catching sight of the faces of the chums in the light from the open doorway of the School House.

The juniors passed in.

A blackened and draggled line of figures, they made as they trailed in at the door, and from everyone who caught sight of them came a yell of laughter.

"It's Gussy!" gasped Gore. "What's happened to Gussy?"

"Ha, ha! What's happened to Tom Merry?"

"What's happened to Blake?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The tarry chums tramped in doggedly without a word. Kind inquiries as to how they had "come so," mingled with loud laughter, but they did not reply. It was really not necessary, for Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was sure to explain.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roars of laughter followed them along the passage and up the stairs. They made for the bath-rooms at once. Hot water and scrubbing-brushes, and plenty of both, were what they needed then.

"Bai Jove! It's howwid!" moaned D'Arcy, as he ran his fingers through his hair, and brought them away black and sticky with tar.

"It's awful!"

"Horrible!"

"Oh, we'll squash that rotter!"

"Better squash Gussy! It's his fault."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"It's curious that Gussy is always getting us into something like this," said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort! If I were not in such a shockin' state at the present moment, Mannahs, I should give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Oh, scat!"

The chums of the School House rubbed and scrubbed and growled and grumbled. The other fellows gathered round the bath-room to wait for them to come out.

When they appeared at last loud laughter greeted them.

In spite of all their efforts, tar was clinging to them—to their ears, their hair, and their finger-nails.

They were likely to be in a tarry state for some days.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gore. "This is ripping! How did you come like that, Tom Merry?"

"It was Lumley."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was that wank outsiders," said D'Arcy. "I was lookin' for him to give him a feahful thwashin', and he had the awful cheek to treat me like this."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am goin' to look for him again. I am goin' to thwash him feahfully. Have any of you chaps seen the Outsider?"

"I've seen him," said Bernard Glyn. "He's gone out—he had a pass."

"Bai Jove! This is wotten!"

"Oh, cheese it, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, with a snort. "We've had enough of looking for Lumley for the present, I think. Chuck it!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Br-r-r!"

The Terrible Three marched off. They had certainly had enough of it. The Outsider had scored, and there was no denying it. The Fourth-Formers went back to their study. In their present piebald state they did not feel inclined to face the crowd in the common-room.

Herries was in the study. Towser had been found, evidently, for he was curled up in a basket, and seemed asleep. He opened one eye, however, as the chums came in, and gave them a look which did not make them feel more comfortable.

"Oh, so you've found the beast?" said Blake.

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Herries snorted.

"I've found Towser," he said.

"Did he kill Pongo?"

"No; Pongo got away," growled Herries. "He's bit Towser, and scratched him. If young Wally doesn't keep that mongrel in his order, it will get drowned one of these days. I can't have it worrying Towser in this way."

"It seems to me that it's Towser that does most of the worrying," grinned Digby.

"Well, he doesn't like mongrels." Herries stared at his chums, for the first time noting their blackened and spotted appearance. "What on earth have you chaps been doing with yourselves?" he asked.

"Looking for Lumley."

"Where did you pick up that tar?"

Jack Blake explained, and Herries grinned.

"Well, you were asses!" he remarked.

"Oh, were we?"

"Yes, rather! If you had waited till I found Towser for you he would have tracked Lumley down like anything, and saved you all the trouble."

"Oh, blow Towser!"

And that was all Blake had to say on the subject. When the chums of the Fourth went up to bed Towser was left in the study, curled up in the basket, and Herries had spread one of D'Arcy's best silk mufflers over him to keep off the draught—needless to say, without consulting D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 7.

Towser is Called In.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was not at all the kind of fellow to bear malice, and as a rule he forgot an offence in a very short time. But it was not so now in connection with the Outsider of St. Jim's. He could have forgiven the tar, as soon as it was cleaned off, because that was, after all, only a jape; but the slap in the face, which had been given in so cowardly a manner, he could not forgive—at all events, until it was avenged. The honour of the D'Arcys was at stake.

And so the next day Arthur Augustus was as implacable as ever. He appeared at morning lessons with chunks of tar adhering to his hair, and smears of it round his ears, and a suppressed chuckle greeted him.

Arthur Augustus took no notice of the chuckle. He maintained a grave and calm repose suited to the caste of Vere de Vere.

He gave Lumley-Lumley one look, however, which warned the Outsider that the affair was not ended yet.

Lumley shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

He had put the leaders of the School House juniors against him, and he was in for a warm time, as anyone could have told him. But to do the Outsider justice, he had a nerve which nothing seemed able to shake, and he did not seem to feel the slightest sensation of fear.

When Mr. Lathom was busy with the blackboard, and his back was turned, Arthur Augustus took the opportunity of making a remark to Lumley-Lumley behind the backs of three or four other fellows who sat between them.

"I say, Lumley, you wottah!" he whispered.

The Outsider looked round.

"I twust you will not wun away fwom me aftah mornin' lessons," said D'Arcy, with a withering look. "I do not want to have to hunt for you."

"Eh?" said Lumley.

"I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"What did you say?"

"You can hear me perfectly well, you wottah!" said D'Arcy, in a voice thrilling with indignation. "You are twyin' to attwact Mr. Lathom's attention."

"Eh?"

"You uttah wottah!"

"What did you say, D'Arcy?"

Mr. Lathom turned round. He was not a very keen gentleman, but he could hardly help bearing Lumley's last remark, which was uttered quite loudly. He gave the swell of St. Jim's a severe look.

"D'Arcy!" he exclaimed.

"Ya-a-a-as, sir!"

"Were you speaking?"

"Weally, sir—"

"Answer my question, D'Arcy, at once!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir! I was speakin'!"

"Take fifty lines for talking in class, D'Arcy."

"Ya-a-as, sir!"

Mr. Lathom turned to the blackboard again. Arthur Augustus looked unutterable things at the grinning Outsider. Jack Blake, unable to contain his disgust, burst out in a fierce whisper.

"You rotten cad!"

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Jerrold looked at him.

"Did you speak to me, Blake?" he asked loudly.

Blake gritted his teeth as Mr. Lathom turned round again.

"You were speaking, Lumley," said the Form-master.

"I answered Blake, sir."

"You should not have done so. You, however, were wrong for speaking in the first place, Blake. You will take fifty lines."

Blake was silent and furious. The Outsider had scored easily. A fellow who had no scruples about sneaking was bound to score.

"Oh, you just wait a bit, that's all!" Blake murmured, under his breath.

Lumley grinned.

He had reduced his enemies to silence, at all events. He knew that they were longing to whisper what they thought of him, but could not do so in case he should betray them to the Form-master.

The chums of the Fourth exchanged significant glances as the morning's lessons drew to a close. They did not mean to let the Outsider escape them this time. Jerrold Lumley was grinning serenely. Although he felt no fear, he had determined to dodge the juniors—partly from mischief, partly, perhaps, because, judging them by himself, he did not expect fair play.

Ten minutes before the time for dismissal came Jerrold Lumley stood up. Mr. Lathom glanced at him.

"If you please, sir, may I go early?" said Lumley. "I have an important letter to post, sir, and it ought to catch the collection."

"Certainly!" said Mr. Lathom.

The Outsider left the class-room.

The juniors looked after him dumbly. The cheek of Jerrold Lumley always took their breath away, to say nothing of his unscrupulousness. They knew perfectly well that he had no important letter to post.

The class was dismissed at last, and the four chums came out together. They looked round for Lumley, but he was not to be seen.

D'Arcy breathed hard.

"The uttah wottah!" he exclaimed. "He's bent on hangin' this thing out. But I shall give him that thwashin', if I have to wait a feahfully long time, deah boys."

"The worm!" said Blake. "He jolly well sha'n't dodge us like this! But where the dickens has he hidden himself this time?"

Herries looked eager.

"I'll find him for you!" he exclaimed.

"How?"

"Towser will do it."

Blake snorted.

"Oh, Towser!"

"Yes, Towser," said Herries firmly. "You know what he is at following a track—like a bloodhound. Just put him on Lumley's track—"

"Now, look here, Herries—"

"Look here, Blake—"

"We may as well twy Towsah," said D'Arcy pacifically. "We can't find Lumley, you know, and Towsah won't hindah if he doesn't help."

"Oh, all right!"

"I'll fetch him," said Herries. "You fellows get something belonging to Lumley—a cap or a boot will do—anything for Towser to sniff at."

And Herries rushed away. The chums of the Fourth had about as much faith in Towser discovering Lumley as in his discovering the North Pole, but they had not the heart to deny Herries. After all, as D'Arcy said, Towser wouldn't hinder, though they did not expect him to help.

Blake discovered a cap of Lumley's, and he had it ready by the time Herries brought Towser out on his chain. Towser was dragging at the chain, as if he didn't particularly want to come, and D'Arcy eyed him rather nervously.

"Pway keep a tight hold on that beast, Hewwies," he said.

"You know perfectly well that he has no wespsect for a fellow's twousahs."

"Oh, Towsy's all right; it's only his fun."

"I do not want my twucks wuined for Towsah's fun."

"Hang your twucks! Gimme that cap."

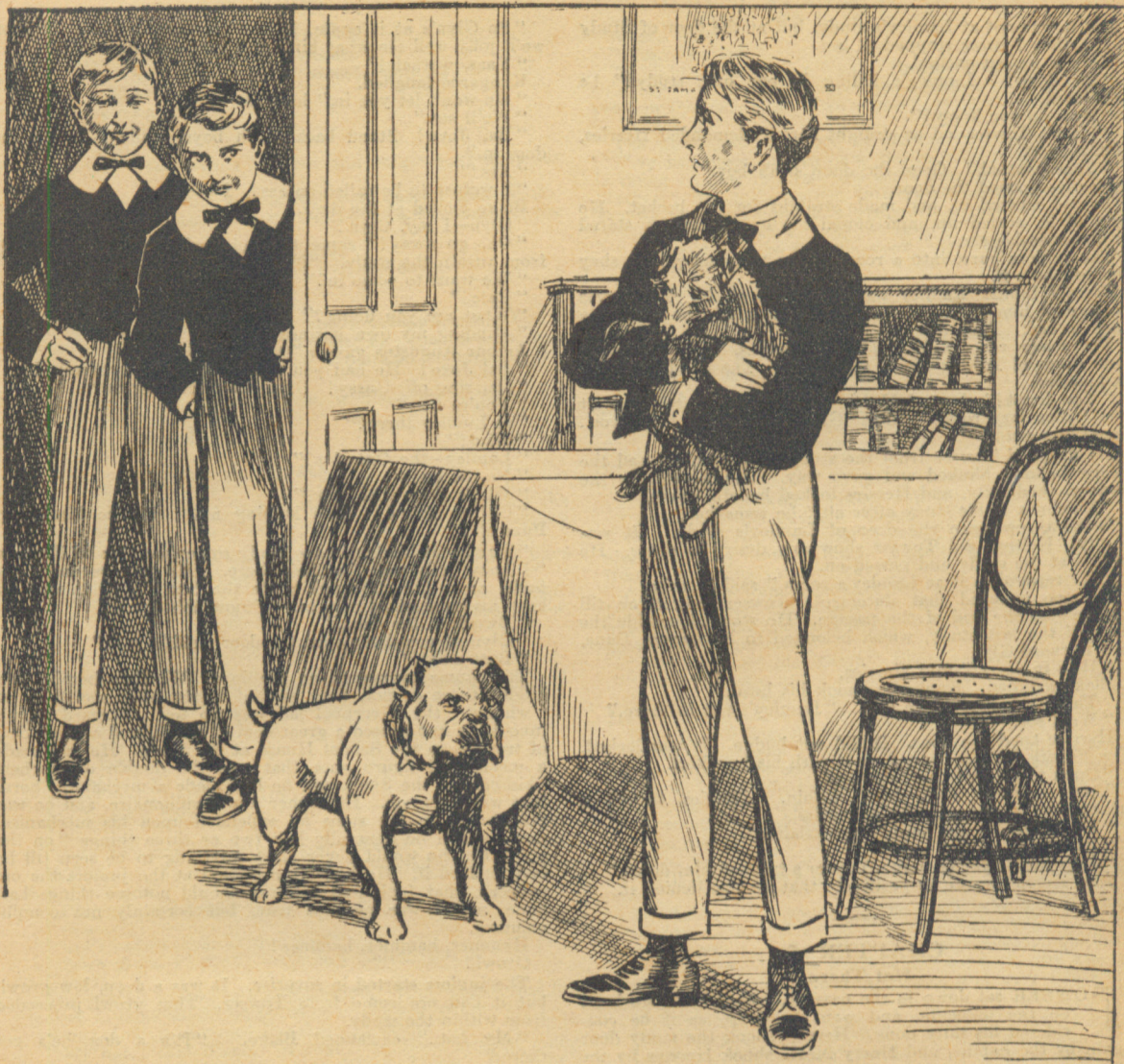
Blake handed Lumley's cap to Herries, who gave it to Towser to smell. Towser seemed a little puzzled at first to know what was meant. Finally, he took the cap, and rent it to pieces.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "You'll have to pay for that, Hewwies, old man."

Herries grunted.

"That's Towser's way of getting the scent," he said. "It's Lumley's own fault. Now, come on, Towser! Pick up the trail, old son!"

"Accordin' to what I've wead, he ought to wush to and fwo till he picks up the trail," Arthur Augustus remarked.



"If you don't chain that wild beast of yours up, Herries, I'll shoot him," said Wally D'Arcy, in tense, impassioned tones. Herries snorted.
 "Towser's all right," he replied. "Only he doesn't like mongrels!" (See page 5.)

"Towser's not that sort of a dog," said Herries scornfully, probably because Towser was sitting quite still. "Towser's all right. You let him alone."

They let Towser alone, and waited. Towser gave the cap another rend, reducing it to tatters, and then sat still with his head on the ground. His eyes closed. Herries looked a little uneasy.

"I suppose he's thinking it out," said Blake solemnly.

Herries looked irritable.

"Well, don't look at him," he said. "Towser doesn't like being looked at."

They looked away from Towser. After about a minute they looked back at him. The bulldog was asleep.

Blake broke into an involuntary chuckle.

"Better let him have a nap, while we look for Lumley," he suggested.

Herries jerked on the chain. Towser woke and growled.

"Come on, old doggy," said Herries. "Buck up! Get a move on, you beast! On the track, you know. Smell him out, Towser!"

Towser wagged his heavy head. He evidently wanted to lie down again and go to sleep, but the drag on the chain stopped that.

A number of juniors gathered round, wondering what was going to happen. They made inquiries, which Herries did not answer.

"What's the little game?" asked Kangaroo. "Are you teaching him tricks, Herries?"

"Or putting him through exercises?" asked Gore.

"It's a system of doggy jiu-jitsu, I think," said Monty Lowther. "Towser is just going to begin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Herries crossly. "How can you expect Towser to follow a track, with a lot of silly asses cackling round him?"

"Follow a track!" said Manners.

"That's what he's doing," said Blake blandly. "We're trying to find Lumley, and Towser is tracking him down."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, stop that cackle!" said Herries. "You'll put Towser out of sorts. Why can't you shut up?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Towser started at last. He trotted off, and Herries gave the chums a triumphant look. Towser led the way straight into the School House.

"Oh, Lumley's indoors, then!" said Herries.

Blake did not reply. He had his doubts about it. But certainly Towser seemed to be intent upon something. He led the way directly into the house, and up the stairs, and into the Fourth Form passage.

"Lumley's in his study, I suppose," Herries remarked.

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But it was not at Lumley's study, but at the door of Study No. 6, that Towser stopped at last.

Herries looked excited.

"By Jove! Lumley's hiding in our own study!" he exclaimed.

"How do you know?"

"Hasn't Towser led us straight here?" demanded Herries, with a snort.

"Yaas, wathah! Open the door, deah boy."

Herries opened the door.

Towser trotted in, and made straight for the basket. He entered it, curled up, and closed his eyes. Herries stared at him speechlessly.

The juniors burst into a roar. They were sorry, but they couldn't help it.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was not in his study. There was no sign of him there. Towser was sleepy, and he had gone back to bed. That was all.

The study rang with laughter. Herries, with a crimson face, dragged Towser out of the basket. The bulldog gasped and sniffed.

"You beast!" shouted Herries. "Get on the track, can't you? You lazy rotten brute! Get on the trail, I tell you! Smell him out!"

He dragged Towser from the study by the chain, and the sleepy bulldog blinked and gave way. He trotted up the passage obediently, and Herries looked hopeful again.

"Lumley's in his study after all," he remarked.

Blake threw open the door of Lumley's study. It was empty. Neither did Towser show any desire to enter. He sniffed at the study and passed on.

"He recognises it as Lumley's room," said Herries.

No one gainsaid that statement. Towser trotted on till he came to the end of the passage. He stopped outside the door of the last study, which belonged to Kangaroo, Dane, and Bernard Glyn.

"He's in there," said Herries.

Blake grinned. Kangaroo shook his head.

"That's my study," he said. "Lumley's not in there."

"We'll see."

Herries tried the door. It did not budge. It was locked. The Fourth-Former rapped on it with his knuckles.

"Open this door!" he exclaimed.

There was no reply from within. Herries turned a triumphant glance upon his comrades.

"I told you he was here!" he exclaimed.

"But—"

"He's here right enough; Towser's tracked him down."

And Herries spoke so positively that no one denied it.

CHAPTER 8.

Not There.

TOWSER sat down in the passage, rested his large head on the linoleum, and went to sleep, as if he considered his duty done. Herries shook the study door again by the handle, and Harry Noble shook Herries by the arm.

"I tell you, he's not in there!" exclaimed Kangaroo.

"Rats!" said Herries.

"But he can't be."

"Bosh!"

"The door's locked!"

"He's locked it to keep us out."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But Glyn's in there."

"I don't care."

"And Clifton Dane."

"So is Lumley."

"I tell you, he isn't!"

"And I tell you, he is! Towser's tracked him down, and that settles it," said Herries obstinately.

"Glyn's making an experiment."

"You utter ass—"

"Oh, don't bother!"

Herries shook the handle, and kicked the door. So far, no reply had come from inside the end study. That seemed to hint that perhaps Herries's suspicions were well-founded. The chums of the Fourth were getting suspicious, too. They did not suspect Towser of having tracked down the right person. But the locked door hinted that there was something or other hidden in the end study.

"Better have the door open," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Can't be did," said Kangaroo.

"Why not?"

"Oh, some new mechanical jape, I suppose," said Monty Lowther. "A blessed electrical man, or a mechanical horse—ch?"

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"So Glyn's at it again, is he?" remarked Blake. "Then we'll jolly well see what kind of a jape he's up to."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Kangaroo laughed.

"He won't let you in," he said.

"We'll see."

"Bai Jove! Stand back, deah boys, while I bweak the door in."

"Ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass! I—"

Blake kicked at the door.

"Glyn—I say, Glyn!"

"Oh, go away!" came the voice of the junior inventor from within the study. "What are you bothering about?"

"We want to come in!"

"Rats!"

"What are you doing?"

"Minding my own business."

Arthur Augustus gave a little chuckle.

"Bai Jove! He had you there, Blake," he remarked.

"Oh, ring off, Gussy! Glyn, we're coming in."

"You're not."

"Is Lumley there?"

"Who?"

"Lumley—the Outsider?"

"No, he isn't."

"Who's there with you?"

"Clifton Dane. He's helping me. You're hindering. Buzz off!"

"Lumley is hidden in the study somewhere," said Herries. "I know jolly well that he's there. He may be under the table, or in the cupboard, or in the box that Glyn used to keep his mechanical man in. I know he's there."

"Bweak in the door."

"Glyn, if you don't open the door we'll bust it."

"Bust away."

The chums hammered on the door. Whether Lumley was hidden there or not, they wanted to see what was the new "wheeze" the Liverpool lad was up to. Bernard Glyn's inventions had caused a great deal of mirth, and a great deal of trouble, in the School House at St. Jim's. He had made a mechanical figure once that was the double of Herbert Skimpole of the Shell, and he had made a mechanical horse that was a marvel. His father was a millionaire, and he was not stinted in the sums he expended upon his mechanical devices, and he generally had two or three things "on the go." But he would never allow anything to be seen till he had finished it. He had often quoted at the juniors the old proverb, that fools and children should not see things half done, which was perhaps true, but certainly not complimentary.

Hammer, hammer, hammer!

Growl!

The juniors started in surprise. It was a deep, low growl, but it had not come from Towser. That growl proceeded from within the study.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "It's a dog he's got there."

"Bai Jove, yaas! I wemembah he said he had a dog that he was going to entah for the Wylcombe Dog Show."

G-r-r-r-r!

Towser pricked up his ears.

Whenever another dog was at hand, Towser lost his usual drowsiness, and became as alert as could be desired. He moved towards the door of the study, sniffed at it, and began to growl.

"There!" exclaimed Herries. "I think that shows pretty plainly that Lumley is in the study."

Blake grinned.

"It shows there's a dog there," he remarked.

"Look here, Blake—"

"Anyway, we'll have the door open."

"I tell you—" began Kangaroo.

"Oh, you ring off! By the way, I believe there's a Yale lock on this door, and each of the three bounders has a key to it," said Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then this blessed Cornstalk has a key about him."

"Collar him!"

Kangaroo made a spring to escape, but three or four pairs of hands seized him, and he was rolled over. He struggled desperately, but in vain; in a few moments the key was found and taken away.

"Bai Jove, here it is!" said D'Arcy. "Open the door, deah boys."

The key clicked in the lock.

There was a sharp, startled exclamation inside the study, and the door flew open, and the juniors rushed into the room.

Towser was in first!

CHAPTER 9.

Run to Earth!

BERNARD GLYN gave a shout.
"Careful, there! You asses! Buzz off!"
"Rats!"

"We're coming in."
"Now, then!"
"Bai Jove!"

There was a snort from Towser, and he pounced upon his enemy.

It was a large mastiff, with a sleek coat, and an open mouth, displaying a formidable set of teeth that glimmered in the light.

Towser was on him in a twinkling.
"Keep that beast off!" roared Bernard Glyn.
"Towser! Towser!"

But Towser did not come off.

He fastened upon the mastiff with a savage growl. But it was only for a moment. The next, he released him, and backed away from him, with an expression of surprise and horror upon his face.

Then, with a low whine, Towser whisked out of the study, and fled along the passage.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake.

"Bai Jove!"

"What's the matter with Towser?"

"Licked, by George!"

Herries rushed after Towser, who was scuttling down the passage at top speed, with his chain clinking and rattling behind him.

Bernard Glyn ran to his mastiff, who did not seem to have turned a hair, and pushed him under the table.

"My hat!" said Blake, again. "Towser soon had enough. Is that the dog you're going to enter at the Rylcombe Show, Glyn?"

"Yes," grunted the Liverpool lad, "get out!"
"Let's have a look at him."
"Weally, Blake, I wegard that dog as a dangerous-lookin' beast. Look out for your twousahs."

"Oh, get out!" said Glyn.

"But—"

"I'm busy."

"What are you up to?"

"Snuff!" said Glyn. "Get out."

"Is Lumley here?"

"No."

"Sure he's not hiding about anywhere?"

"Of course, he isn't, you chump!" roared Glyn. "Why don't you go?"

"Perhaps we'd better turn the study out," said Digby.

"Buzz off!"

"Let's have a look at the dog."

"Seize them, Prince!" exclaimed Clifton Dane.

Growl!

The juniors backed out of the study. That mastiff had not looked as if he would be pleasant at close quarters.

Bernard Glyn slammed the door on them.

"My hat," said Blake, "if that's the beast Glyn is going to enter for the Rylcombe Dog Show, I don't think he's going to walk off the prize for the handsomest dog! Of all the savage brutes—"

"He did for Towser jolly soon!" chuckled Digby.

"Yaas, wathah."

"I can't understand Towser bolting like that," said Blake, puzzled. "Towser's got heaps of pluck, and I've never seen him afraid of a dog before."

"It's odd. But that mastiff of Glyn's was a savage brute. He has a growl enough to curdle your blood."

"Yaas, wathah. By the way, we haven't found Lumley yet."

"Oh, hang Lumley!"

"Weally, Blake—"

Herries met them in the passage with a gloomy look. They stopped to sympathise with him.

"Sorry about Towser," said Blake. "He bit off more than he could chew that time. I hope he wasn't hurt."

"Not a scratch," said Herries. "I can't understand it. Towser's never turned tail on a dog before."

"Yaas, it's curious. But—"

"I think he must be ill. I don't know whether the study's quiet enough for him," said Herries. "It would be rotten for him to be ill just before the dog show, wouldn't it? I noticed that he was very restless last evening while we were doing the prep. It seemed to worry him."

"Perhaps the study is a bit too noisy for him," suggested Blake hopefully.

"That's just what I was thinking."

"Well, in that case—"

"Would you fellows mind if—if—"

"If you took him back to the kennels? Not at all, old

chap. Of course, we should—er—miss him a little," said Blake. "That's only to be expected. But if it's for Towser's good."

"Yaas, wathah."

"I didn't mean that," said Herries irritably. "I was thinking that perhaps you chaps wouldn't mind doing your prep. in the form-room of an evening, so that Towser wouldn't be disturbed."

The three juniors looked at Herries in silence.

They had consented to have the bulldog in the study, and in doing so they had felt like three heroes of Fox's Book of Martyrs. But to be turned entirely out of the study so that Towser could be quiet and undisturbed there—

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, at last.

"It would only be for this week," said Herries.

"My hat!"

"I suppose you don't mind?"

"Oh, not at all!" said Blake sarcastically. "But if you don't go into the study, who will watch over Towser and comfort him when he's lonely, and read to him when—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Weally, Hewwies, you know—"

"I think it would be only chummy to do it," said Herries huffily. "But if you don't care about it—"

"Oh, have the study, and every other blessed thing!" said Blake resignedly. "I only stipulate that Towser allows us to breathe."

"Look here—"

"We haven't found Lumley yet, deah boys."

"Quite so. We haven't. Come on."

"I'm going to look after Towser," said Herries. "I'm afraid he's not quite in form. I can't understand his bolting from Glyn's dog in that way."

And Herries went back into No. 6. Blake and Digby and D'Arcy resumed the search for the Outsider. But he was not to be found, and the dinner-bell rang, and they had to go to the dining-room.

"We shall find him there," Blake remarked.

"Yaas, wathah, and I sha'n't lose sight of him again."

Sure enough, Jerrold Lumley turned up at the dinner table. He grinned across it at the chums of the Fourth Form.

They looked daggers at him in response.

When dinner was over, Blake contrived to be the first out of the dining-room, and he waited at the door for the Outsider.

Jerrold Lumley had to pass him to go out, and Blake linked arms with him as he came by.

"I want to speak to you," he said.

"Let me go."

"Not just yet."

"Will you let me go, Blake?" said Lumley, raising his voice.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, who was leaving the dining-room, looked round sharply. Blake gritted his teeth, and released the Outsider, who immediately quitted the School House. But he was not to escape. Digby was on his track, and so was Arthur Augustus, and they followed him into the quadrangle.

D'Arcy tapped him on the shoulder there

"I want you," he remarked.

Lumley-Lumley swung round.

There was no escape for him. Blake was coming up to join his chums, and several more juniors of the Fourth and the Shell were gathering round. There was quickly a ring round them. All the Lower School knew what Lumley had done, and that he had persistently avoided giving an account of himself, and all had agreed that he should either fight the swell of St. Jim's or apologise for his act.

Lumley-Lumley was hemmed in now, and Mellish, his only friend, promptly scuttled off as the crowd gathered.

A look of hard defiance came over the Outsider's face.

"Well, what do you want?" he demanded.

"We want you, Lumley."

"If you're thinking of a ragging, I guess you'd better go slow," said Jerrold. "I'm not the chap to take it lying down. If you lay a finger on me, the Head will hear all about it, I promise you that."

There was a general hiss.

"Sneak!"

Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Sneak or not, I'm not going to be ragged!"

"We're not thinking of ragging you," said Blake quietly. "You struck D'Arcy yesterday, and ran away. He's been looking for you all the time, and you've kept out of his way. You're going to fight him or apologise."

"Yaas, wathah."

Lumley laughed contemptuously.

"Apologise to that tailor's dummy!" he exclaimed.

Arthur Augustus turned crimson.

"I wufese to be alluded to as a tailah's dummy!" he exclaimed. "I wegard you as a low wottah, Lumley, and I will be a weal pleasure to give you a feahful thwashin'."

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "Gussy wins!"
 D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked down at the gasping, beaten Outsider. His look was rather compassionate.

"I am sowwy I have had to give you a feahful thwashin', deah boy," he remarked. "It was weally vewy much against my wish. I only wanted to avenge the affwont to the D'Arcys. I weally wish you had left off soonah. I am sowwy."

The Outsider groaned.
 "Hang you!" he said. "I'll lick you yet!"
 "You are welcome to twy," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

"As fah as I am concerned, this mattah is now closed."
 And, putting on his waistcoat and jacket with Blake's help, the swell of St. Jim's walked away with his friends.
 Tom Merry lingered a moment with Lumley.

"Can I help you?" he asked hesitatingly.
 "No!" snarled the Outsider.
 "But—"
 "Keep your help for those who ask for it."
 Tom Merry went away quietly.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley remained alone.
 He stood up, holding to the chapel railings to keep himself from falling. He was weak, exhausted, dizzy. His senses were swimming. He looked round him with dizzy eyes. He was alone; all were gone—D'Arcy accompanied by a congratulatory crowd, himself left without even a sympathiser.

It was his own fault, but that did not make it any the more pleasant. Jerrold Lumley gritted his teeth, and with slow and heavy steps made his way towards the School House.

CHAPTER 11.
 Towser in Clover.

"LET'S take him for a run," said Kangaroo.
 "But—"
 "We may as well, and see how it goes."

"But—"
 "Oh, come on! What do you say, Dane?"
 "Good egg!" said Clifton Dane, grinning.

Bernard Glyn still hesitated.
 "The chaps may catch on," he said.
 "Oh, rats! They're more likely to be afraid of Prince catching on."

"Oh, all right, then! I'll bring him."
 The chums of the end study quitted their quarters at the end of the Shell passage, and Bernard Glyn led his mastiff by a cord.

The big, massive animal followed him with a somewhat jerky, mechanical walk, but quickly enough. It was evidently an active animal; and Glyn evidently took care of it, for its coat was very clean and good. Its eyes moved a little sleepily, and the partly open jaws showed a set of teeth which seemed to hint that Prince might not be a comfortable neighbour at close quarters.

Tom Merry met the chums in the passage. He gave the dog a rather doubtful glance.
 "That beast safe?" he asked.

"Safe as houses," said Bernard Glyn cheerfully. "If you touch him, you're safe to get a bite."
 "Oh!"

"Stroke his head and see," suggested the Liverpool lad.
 "Thanks; I'll take your word for it."

Bernard Glyn grinned, and walked on. He passed the door of Study No. 5 in the Fourth Form passage, and Kangaroo kicked it open. There was a growl from within. Herries was there with Towser, but the others were out. Herries glared at the chums of the Shell.

"What the dickens are you making that row for?" he demanded. "You've disturbed Towser."
 "Poor Towser!"
 "Oh, get out!"

"I thought he might be lonely," said Kangaroo. "We've brought Prince to see him."
 Herries frowned.
 "Take that beast away!" he exclaimed.

"But—"
 "Towser will go for him and kill him, I expect."
 "Ha, ha! Towser's welcome."

The bulldog looked over the top of his back at Prince. He did not jump out to tackle the stranger, in his usual way. Instead of that, he gave a whine, and cowered down in the bottom of the basket. Herries gave him a glare of angry surprise. He simply could not make Towser out.

Cornstalk & Co. burst into a roar of laughter.
 "Oh, buzz off!" exclaimed Herries. "You're making Towser quite ill, among you. Get out!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Herries reached towards the inkpot on the table. The Shell fellows hurried out, and Bernard Glyn dragged Prince after him.

Herries turned to Towser with a worried look.
 "Poor old Towsy!" he murmured. "You're not ill, I suppose? You look fit enough. What's the matter with you? Poor old Towsy!"

Poor old Towsy whined, but gave no further explanation of what was the matter with him. Herries rubbed his big head affectionately, and tickled his neck; but Towser was evidently worried.

"Hewwies, old man—"
 Herries turned round irritably as Arthur Augustus came into the study.
 "Don't make a row, D'Arcy."

"Eh?"
 "Be quiet!"
 "Bai Jove!"
 "I think Towser wants to go to sleep."
 "Weally, Hewwies—"
 "I'd rather you didn't talk."

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and looked alternately at Herries and the bulldog. His feelings were too deep for words for some moments.

"Hewwies!" he said, at last.
 "Don't jaw, old chap. It disturbs Towser."
 "Blow Towsah!"
 "Quiet!"

"I came in here to get a necktie—"
 "Look here, D'Arcy—"
 "My necktie is soiled," said D'Arcy. "I have discovered a spot of ink on it. I did not see it myself, but Lowthah pointed it out to me. I am vewy gwateful to Lowthah for that service. He has his good points. I cannot see my necktie box. Have you seen it, Hewwies?"

"Oh, don't talk, Gussy!"
 "But my necktie box—"
 "Take one of Blake's ties."
 "Their colour does not suit me, Hewwies. I should think you know that the colour of a necktie has to either harmonise with or contwast with the colour of a chap's eyes. It is vewy important to wear a necktie that suits you."

"Hush!"
 "Where's the box, then?"
 "What kind of a box was it?" asked Herries, exasperated.

"How should I know?"
 "It was a wooden box with an inlaid top, Hewwies; a present from my Cousin Ethel."
 "Wooden box? Oh, you can't have it!"
 "Can't have it?"
 "No."

"What do you mean?"
 "It's in use."
 "In use!"
 "Yes. Do get out, Gussy. Take one of Dig's ties."
 "But—"

"You're keeping Towser awake!"
 "Look here, Hewwies, where's my tie box?" demanded D'Arcy.

"I've used it to prop up Towser's basket on one side. It rocks if it's not propped up, and Towser doesn't like it to rock."
 D'Arcy was speechless for a moment.

"You—you've used my tie box—my inlaid box, a present from Cousin Ethel—to pwop up a wotten basket for a wotten bulldog!" he gasped, at last.
 "Look here, D'Arcy—"
 "Give me my box!"

"I can't, without disturbing Towser."
 "Hewwies—"

"I'll try to get it presently, and put something else in its place, when Towser's feeding," said Herries. "I can't have him disturbed now. He looks as if he's going to nod off."

"You uttah ass—"
 "Hush!"
 "Hewwies—"
 "S'ah!"

"Hewwies, if you do not immediately hand me that box, I shall forget that you are my friend, and stwike you."
 "Don't you make a row here, Gussy."
 "I insist—"

"I think you're utterly inconsiderate," said Herries. "You've got a prejudice against Towser, like Blake and Digby. You might be decent about it, when I've entered him for the dog show."
 "But weally—"

"I don't see what you want to come into the study at all for. This constant coming in and going out may have a serious effect on Towser's nerves."



"Look out!" shouted Tom Merry. With a shrill yelp Pongo darted out of the study, with Towser after him. Wally and Herries, equally alarmed for their favourites, rushed in pursuit. (See page 6.)

"What's the good of standing up to be knocked down like a blessed sack of wheat?" he asked. "You can see you have no chance."

"I shall stick it out."

"D'Arcy could make rings round you at any time, and he's knocked you out now. What's the good of going on?"

"I guess that's my business."

Tom Merry gave it up. If Lumley-Lumley chose to go on and take his punishment, it was his own business, after all.

"Time!" said Manners.

Lumley-Lumley toed the line. He was looking decidedly "rocky," but his hard lips were set with determination.

"I am sowwy, deah boy; but if you go on, I shall have to hurt you," Arthur Augustus remarked.

"Hang you!"

"Weally——"

Arthur Augustus had no time to say more. The Outsider was rushing at him, attacking fiercely, and the swell of St. Jim's needed all his breath for the fight.

Good as D'Arcy's defence was, the desperate Outsider succeeded in getting through it several times, and his

knuckles crashed home several times upon D'Arcy's face, but the punishment he received in return was terrible.

The round was fast and furious, and the crowd of juniors looked on with eager eyes.

For a moment or two it seemed possible that the Outsider might carry all before him and win the fight by mere savage determination and recklessness of heart. But that was not to be.

Arthur Augustus made an effort, and the wild attacking of the Outsider was stopped by a right-hander that crashed between his eyes.

Lumley-Lumley reeled back, and fell like a log.

Tom Merry ran to the fallen junior.

He tried to help Lumley, but the Outsider was "done" this time. He could not rise. He sat up, and his head fell heavily against Tom Merry's knee.

Manners counted.

After ten had been counted, Lumley-Lumley was still sitting dazedly in the grass, his head resting on Tom Merry's knee, and his breath coming in short, quick gasps.

Manners snapped his watch shut.

"Time's up!" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"
"Gussy wins!"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked down at the gasping, beaten Outsider. His look was rather compassionate.

"I am sowwy I have had to give you a feahful thwashin', deah boy," he remarked. "It was weally vewy much against my wish. I only wanted to avenge the affront to the D'Arcys. I weally wish you had left off soonah. I am sowwy."

The Outsider groaned.

"Hang you!" he said. "I'll lick you yet!"

"You are welcome to twy," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

"As fah as I am concerned, this mattah is now closed."

And, putting on his waistcoat and jacket with Blake's help, the swell of St. Jim's walked away with his friends.

Tom Merry lingered a moment with Lumley.

"Can I help you?" he asked hesitatingly.

"No!" snarled the Outsider.

"But—"

"Keep your help for those who ask for it."

Tom Merry went away quietly.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley remained alone.

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"Poor Towser!"

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Cornstalk & Co. burst into a roar of laughter.

"Oh, buzz off!" exclaimed Herries. "You're making Towser quite ill, among you. Get out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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NEXT THURSDAY: "LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL"

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"Bai Jove!"

"I think Towser wants to go to sleep."

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"Where's the box, then?"

"What kind of a box was it?" asked Herries, exasperated.

"How should I know?"

"It was a wooden box with an inlaid top, Hewwies; a present from my Cousin Ethel."

"Wooden box? Oh, you can't have it!"

"Can't have it?"

"No."

"What do you mean?"

"It's in use."

"In use!"

"Yes. Do get out, Gussy. Take one of Dig's ties."

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"Look here, D'Arcy—"

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"Hush!"

"Hewwies—"

"S'hh!"

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"Don't you make a row here, Gussy."

"I insist—"

"I think you're utterly inconsiderate," said Herries. "You've got a prejudice against Towser, like Blake and Digby. You might be decent about it, when I've entered him for the dog show."

"But weally—"

"I don't see what you want to come into the study at all for. This constant coming in and going out may have a serious effect on Towser's nerves."

"I suppose we haven't got to sacrifice evewythin' to that wotten bulldog, have we, Hewwies?" gasped D'Arcy.

"Hush!"

"But—"

"Hush! Hush! He's asleep!"

If it had been a young mother with her first baby, the scene could not have been more touching. D'Arcy stared at Herries blankly, undecided whether to kick the basket flying and take his necktie box, or to do as Herries wished. He decided on the side of friendship, and left the study quietly, leaving the inlaid box, the present from Cousin Ethel, still propping up Towser's basket, and Herries watching affectionately over his bulldog's slumbers.

CHAPTER 12.

A Very Surprising Dog.

"B-R-R-R-R!"

"Hallo! Here's Glyn with his new beast!"

"Looks a ruffian, too!"

"Look at his teeth!"

"Phew!"

"Better keep your distance."

Those remarks, and many more of the same kind, greeted Bernard Glyn and his chums as they strolled in the St. Jim's quadrangle with Prince.

Prince was walking very jerkily, but that may have been caused by Glyn's jerking of the leash. Otherwise, he seemed an active dog enough. Fellows looked at him from far and near. They knew that Glyn had entered him for the local dog show on Saturday, and they knew that Towser and Pongo were already entered. The general idea seemed to be that Prince would take the biscuit, as far as the school was concerned. He was certainly a better-looking dog than Wally's mongrel, and quite as good as Towser.

"Hallo! Where did you dig that up?" exclaimed Wally, who was in the quad, with Jameson and Gibson of the Third.

"What do you call it?"

"Prince."

"I mean, is it a dog?"

Bernard Glyn laughed.

"Looks a pretty middling sort of tripehound," said Jameson. "You haven't had the cheek to enter him for the dog show, Glyn?"

"Yes, I have."

"Poof!" said Wally. "My only Aunt Jane! Fancy having the cheek to enter a thing like that, when you knew that Pongo was entered."

And Wally bestowed an affectionate look upon the shaggy mongrel which was, as usual, at his heels. Pongo was eyeing Prince very doubtfully. He seemed dubious whether to attack the stranger or not. He yapped and growled, and Prince growled in response. Wally looked curiously at the mastiff.

"That's a curious beast," he said. "He only growls when you jerk the string. He's got no spirit."

"Let Pongo go for him," suggested Kangaroo. "Then you'll see whether he's got any spirit or not."

Pongo had settled that matter for himself. He made a sudden bolt at Prince, and fastened upon his neck.

"Here, Pongo, Pongo!" shouted Wally. "Come off!"

But Pongo did not need calling.

No sooner had his teeth closed upon the mastiff's neck, than they unclosed again, and Pongo, with a whine of terror, darted off at top speed across the quadrangle.

"Pongo!" roared Wally.

But Pongo did not stop.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bernard Glyn.

"Pongo! Pongo!"

"What on earth's the matter with Pongo?" exclaimed Jameson, in amazement.

"Blessed if I know. Pongo! Pongo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally rushed off after Pongo.

Cornstalk & Co. chuckled, and strolled on with the mastiff. They strolled towards the New House, and there was a shout from a group of New House juniors outside that building.

"School House cads!"

"Get off!"

The chums of the Shell walked on.

"My hat!" said Figgins of the New House. "Look at them!"

"The cheek!" said Kerr.

"By George, we'll—"

"Hold on!" said Fatty Wynn hastily. "They may be coming to ask us to a feed, or something of that sort."

Figgins snorted.

"Do they look like it?" he demanded.

"Well, no; but you don't want to run any risk on such an important matter," said Fatty Wynn. "You see—"

"Rats! They're just swanking over on our side of the quad. out of pure cheek," said Figgins. "It's up to us to bump them."

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr.

"Oh, all right, only if—"

"Come on!"

Figgins stalked off towards the School House fellows, with a crowd of New House juniors at his heels.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "What do you chaps want here?"

"Nothing, only to look at your sweet faces," said Glyn. "We don't often see a face like yours, Figgins, except as an ornament on a water-spout, and—"

Figgins turned crimson.

"Bump them!" he exclaimed.

G-r-r-r-r!

The mastiff growled.

"Oh!" ejaculated Kerr. "Hold on!"

"Seize 'em, Prince!" shouted Kangaroo.

Bernard Glyn jerked the string.

The mastiff made a spring forward, and the New House juniors scattered before the white teeth and red jaws.

It was no wonder. The mastiff looked quite capable of disposing of a limb or two with his teeth without any difficulty.

"Here, keep that beast off!" roared Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Seize 'em, Prince!"

"Go for 'em! Good dog!"

The New House juniors backed away.

Glyn and his comrades advanced, with the mastiff snapping his teeth, and Figgins & Co. fairly bolted.

Bumping the School House fellows was one thing, but arguing at close quarters with a savage mastiff was quite another.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kangaroo.

The chums of the end study paraded before the New House with the mastiff, and no one ventured to say them nay.

They were watched with great admiration from the other side of the quadrangle by a crowd of School House fellows.

They came back to their own territory at last, triumphant.

"Jolly good!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "That was a set-down for Figgins & Co., and no mistake."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Would the brute really have bitten them?" asked Kerruish.

Bernard Glyn laughed.

"I don't think so," he said. "But you can see whether he would bite. Give him a tap on the head."

Kerruish drew back.

"Thanks—no!" he said.

"Here, Mellish, you try."

"Rats!" said Mellish.

Mellish backed away from the mastiff as Glyn came towards him. Mellish was afraid of dogs. He was cruel to animals, and a fellow who is cruel to animals generally is afraid of them. He eyed Prince very uneasily, and the chums of the end study came on towards him, and he backed into the School House, his face going white.

"Take that beast away!" he panted.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mellish retreated into the passage. Glyn & Co. followed him, laughing; and Mellish reached the end of the passage, and could go no further.

A large broom stood there, left there temporarily by the housemaid. Mellish grasped it with both hands.

"Take that beast away!" he said, between his teeth. "If it comes any nearer, I'll—I'll smash it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mellish swung the broom into the air, and brought it down with a crash upon the back of the mastiff.

The blow would have killed or crippled any other dog; but, curiously enough, it had no effect upon Bernard Glyn's mastiff.

Mellish, with starting eyes, saw the animal's back "give" to the shock, as if it were made of indiarubber; and then the mastiff walked on, as if nothing had happened.

With a shriek of terror, Mellish dropped the broom, and bounded past the bulldog and fled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A roar of laughter followed him, but Mellish did not stop.

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Another Splendid Long, Complete

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ANSWERS

NEXT THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL."

CHAPTER 13.

The Outsider's Scheme.

"HANG it! Hang it! Oh, how I hate them!" Mellish heard those words as he entered his study in the Fourth-Form passage, after his escape from Bernard Glyn's remarkable mastiff.

Mellish was panting, and still in a state of great alarm. He hurried into the study, and slammed the door after him, as if he were afraid of the mastiff following him in.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley was sitting in the armchair.

He was not a pleasant sight to look at.

One of his eyes was blackened, his nose was swollen, and his lips were cut, his cheeks bruised.

He looked as if he had gone through a desperate encounter, and got very much the worst of it, as was the case. He looked up and scowled at Mellish.

"Feeling bad?" asked the latter.

"Don't I look as if I were?" asked Lumley irritably.

"I should recommend a beef steak for that eye."

"Oh, rats!"

"You do look a wreck, and no mistake," said Mellish, glancing at his chum, not without a touch of satisfaction. "D'Arcy has used you up."

Lumley scowled.

"You look as if you'd been wrestling with a lawn-mower, or something of that sort," Mellish remarked.

"Do you think I need telling that, hang you?"

"Well, what did you tackle D'Arcy for? I told you that he could take care of himself, and was a good boxer."

Lumley grunted.

"Well, he didn't look it," he said. "How was I to know? And you're such a liar, Mellish! Anyway, I'm not sorry I took him on; only this is rotten!"

"Well, you look rotten!" said Mellish coolly. "I dare say you feel rotten, too. You should stick to your boxing practice a little more before you tackle any of the fellows in No. 6 Study."

"I mean to."

Lumley ground his teeth.

"But I'm not going to wait till then to get even with D'Arcy," he said. "I'm going to make him sit up for this, hang him!"

"I'm with you," said Mellish. "You can count on me for anything against Study No. 6. But what's the idea?"

"I don't know. Can't you think of something? What's the good of you, if you can't think of some cowardly, treacherous trick when it's wanted?"

Mellish smiled a sickly smile.

He benefited very much by his friendship with the Outsider of St. Jim's. He borrowed money of him which he never intended to repay, and made use of Lumley in many ways. But he had to pay the usual penalty of a toady. When Lumley was in a bad temper—as was very frequently the case—Mellish had to endure the rough edge of his tongue; and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley's tongue could be very rough.

"Why not lay a booby trap for them in their study?" he asked, after a pause.

"What do you mean?"

"A bag of soot lodged over the door, to fall on them when they go in—or a can of water," said Mellish.

Lumley sniffed.

"That's not enough."

"It would make them feel pretty uncomfy, I should think."

Lumley-Lumley's eyes glistened.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "The idea's not bad. We might rig up a bag of soot, and put a string across the floor of the study, and some cinders for them to fall on."

Mellish whistled.

"That's rather overdoing it," he remarked. "No good really hurting them—"

The Outsider snapped his teeth.

"That's just what I want to do!" he exclaimed. "By Jove, I'll put tin-tacks for them to fall on!"

Mellish looked uneasy.

"Better not."

"Why?" asked Lumley fiercely.

"They would find out who did it, and—"

"I don't care!"

"Don't be a fool, Lumley! You would be ragged by the whole Form."

"I don't care that for the Form!" said Lumley-Lumley, snapping his fingers. "I guess I've got them all against me, anyway."

"But—"

"Oh, don't jaw! Have you got a packet of tacks, now?"

"No."

"Get one, then."

"But—"

"Get one. You can get them at the tuckshop."

"Look here, if they inquire—"

"You can say you had nothing to do with it," said Lumley. "I know you're too cowardly to have a hand in the trick, anyway."

Mellish bit his lip.

"Oh, all right!" he said.

"I'll play it on them this evening," said Lumley, with a chuckle. "They don't get a light in the study till they're inside, and they won't see the cord across the floor, or the tacks. My word! I'd give something to see D'Arcy go down on them!"

"There will be a row."

"I guess so."

"Mind, it will be a row—a real row—and you may get ragged by the Form, and I shall jolly well keep clear of it," said Mellish.

"Bah! Do as you like!"

"About the tacks—"

"Get them for me. I don't want Mrs. Taggles to remember me as having got them," said Lumley. "Go and do it now."

Mellish hesitated. Lumley clenched his fist.

"Are you going?" he demanded.

"Wait a bit—"

"Go, I tell you! I'm not going to ask you to take a hand in it. I'll do the whole of the bizney myself. I guess you haven't grit enough, anyway."

"I wasn't thinking of that. Glyn's got his beastly dog in the passage and he was setting it on to me just now," said Mellish.

"Oh, rats! Are you afraid of a dog?"

"I'll bet you would be."

Lumley sniffed.

"Get out!" he said. "I never saw such a coward!"

Mellish opened the door, and looked cautiously up and down the passage. There was no trace of the chums of the end study or of the mastiff.

"Coast clear?" sneered Lumley.

"Yes."

"Then buzz off!"

Mellish nodded, and left the study. He did not like his errand, but he could not afford to quarrel with Jerrold Lumley. The Outsider of St. Jim's was too valuable to him for that.

Mellish hurried to the tuckshop. Mrs. Taggles sold all sorts of commodities as well as eatables, and Mellish had no difficulty in getting what Lumley required. He came back to the study, and took the packet from his pocket.

Lumley opened it, and ran some of the tacks through his fingers, with a grin of spiteful satisfaction.

"Good enough," he said. "That's all right."

Mellish hesitated a moment.

"I advise you to drop the idea," he said. "The cord to fall over is all right, but putting the tacks on the floor is a rotten trick, and all the fellows will be ratty about it."

"Mind your own business."

"Oh, all right!"

"When I want your advice I'll ask for it," said Lumley-Lumley.

Mellish quitted the study without another word.

CHAPTER 14.

Towser There!

JACK BLAKE looked into Study No. 6 after afternoon lessons that day. Herries was there, and he put his finger to his lips as Blake came in.

Blake halted irresolutely on the threshold.

"He's asleep," whispered Herries.

"Who is?"

"Towser."

"Oh, Towser!"

"He's been better lately," said Herries. "I'm afraid that dog of Glyn's must be in a pretty rotten condition. Towser hasn't been the same since he bit him. I thought it was a case of poisoning at first. You noticed that Towser didn't like the taste."

"I thought he was afraid of Prince."

Herries snorted.

"What rot! Towser isn't afraid of any dog. He'd eat Prince to pieces if I set him on, only of course you can't expect him to bite a dog that's not in a fit state to be bitten."

Blake grinned.

"I suppose not," he assented.

"He's asleep now," said Herries. "He's eaten a whole biscuit and a bit of steak. I think he'll go on all right, if he's not disturbed."

"But—"

"Would you mind speaking in a low voice?"
 "Oh, not at all," said Blake sarcastically. "I wouldn't disturb his baby slumbers for anything. I came here—"
 "It was understood that prep. was to be done in the Form-room," said Herries.
 "Yes, but—"
 "I suppose you wouldn't mind having tea in Hall, too?"
 "Oh, pile it on!" said Blake.
 "Well, it's no good doing things by halves. If you have tea in here, you may as well do your prep. here, and have done with it."

"I came here—"
 "Hush!"
 "To get my books. Can I have them, or has Towser any use for them?" asked Blake, with heavy sarcasm. "Of course, if Towser feels inclined to gnaw up my Latin dictionary, or wants to play skittles with Todhunter, I've no objection to make."

"You can't have the dictionary. I've used it to prop his basket on one side," said Herries. "The other books are on the table. Take them quietly."

Blake breathed very, very deep, and took his books and departed. He went along to Tom Merry's study in the Shell passage.

The Terrible Three were just beginning tea. There were eggs and bacon galore on the table, and a considerable quantity of cake.

"Come in!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "Had your tea?"

"No; I'm having tea in Hall," grunted Blake. "I looked in to see if you could lend me a Latin dictionary."

"For tea?" asked Lowther.

"Oh, don't be an ass! I suppose you know that Towser's taken possession of my study, and we're all turned out on to a cold world," said Blake. "It's pretty rotten, but we're standing it to please Herries. He's got Towser in a cock-eyed basket, and he's propped the basket up with Gussy's necktie box and my Latin dictionary."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Towser mustn't be disturbed, so I'm going to borrow your dictionary, and Gussy has to go about for hours at a time without changing his tie."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "We've got to do our prep. in the Form-room, and have tea in Hall," said Blake. "It's very nice—I don't think. Gimme that rotten dictionary."

"Have tea with us," said Tom Merry hospitably. "We've got an unusually good supply, and you've come in just at the right moment."

"Oh, I didn't come in to sponge on you for a tea," said Blake. "I wanted a rotten dictionary."

"Well, tea's ready."
 "You're awfully good!" said Blake. "If I'm going to have tea I'll call D'Arcy and Dig, if you don't mind, and pass your invitation on to them."

Tom Merry laughed.
 "By all means," he assented. "What about Herries?"
 "Oh, I'll ask him; but I know he won't leave Towser. Towser has been off his feed ever since he chewed Glyn's dog."

Blake was right there. Herries looked up with his finger on his lips as Blake looked into No. 6 again.

"I hope you haven't forgotten a book," said Herries. "You can't come in. You might mention to Dig and Gussy that they can't come in."

"Will you come to tea with Tom Merry?"
 Herries shook his head.
 "Thanks; but I don't think I'd better leave Towser just now."

"What are you going to do for your tea?"
 "I've got a roll here."
 Blake sniffed.

"I'll bring you something if you like," he said.
 Herries shook his head.
 "No, I'd rather you didn't come back. Opening the door disturbs Towser. I thought I saw his eyelids move then."

"Look here, Herries—"
 "Shut the door after you, will you?"
 "I say—"
 "Shut it quietly."

Blake went out and shut the door quietly. He found Digby and Arthur Augustus, and they went to tea with Tom Merry. When the juniors all went out together after tea, Herries was still with his favourite.

He came down later, however, to do his prep. with the others in the Form-room. He thought of asking Mr. Lathom to excuse him prep., but on reflection he decided that the Fourth Form-master wouldn't understand the importance of looking after Towser.

"Better do it, old chap," said Digby. "I dare say Towser will be all the better for not being looked after so much."

A remark to which Towser's master replied only with a snort.

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley had his eyes open about that time—or, rather, one eye open. The other was still closed, as a result of his encounter with Arthur Augustus. The Outsider noted that the chums of the Fourth were doing their prep. in the Form-room, and he wondered why; and he immediately came to the conclusion that he would never have a better opportunity of laying the little trap for them.

They were sure to return to the study before going to bed, to put their books away, and then they would fall easily into the trap.

Why they were in the Form-room just then Lumley did not know, and did not care. He knew nothing about Towser being in No. 6.

He went to his study, and took the packet of tacks and a loop of cord in his hand, and went along to No. 6.

The Fourth Form passage was deserted.

Most of the fellows were in the common-room, or in their studies, and in the dimly lighted passage there was no one to see Lumley.

The Outsider paused outside the door of No. 6. There was no light under the door, and all was silent within.

Jerrold Lumley quietly opened the door, and peeped into the study. Darkness and silence.

He stepped in.

There was a faint glimmer of light from the window. It was enough for Jerrold's purpose. He did not want to light the gas, for it would betray him to anyone passing along the corridor. And the trick he was about to play was not one he wanted to be discovered in playing.

As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom, he unrolled the cord, and scattered the tacks on the floor, just inside the door.

Then he groped and fumbled for two substantial articles to tie the cord to by its ends, so that anyone entering would catch his feet in it and fall.

The dangerous nature of the trick, and its cowardice, were nothing to Jerrold Lumley. He was only thinking of wreaking his spite upon D'Arcy and his chums.

He tied one end of the cord to the bookcase. Then he paused. It seemed to him that his ear had caught a faint sound of breathing in the room.

He stood bolt upright, listening.

Was it possible that there was someone in the room all the time, watching him in the dark? Lumley shivered a little at the thought. There was something uncanny in the idea, and he cast quick, nervous glances round him.

"Anybody here?" he muttered, in a voice that shook in spite of himself.

There was no reply.
 "Who was that?"

No reply, but the sound of a movement. Lumley gritted his teeth. There was somebody, or something, in the study.

"Hang you!" he muttered savagely. "Hang you! Who are you, you spying hound?"

Gr-r-r!
 It was a dog's deep growl.
 Lumley jumped.

He sprang towards the door, but something in the gloom of the study sprang more quickly. There was a savage growl again, and Lumley felt sharp teeth close upon his leg. He gave a wild yell, and kicked out savagely at the dog in the dark.

Towser growled once more and bit.
 Lumley gave a yell that rang through the School House.

CHAPTER 15.

No Luck for Lumley.

"**B**AI Jove!"
 "Phew!"
 "What's that?"
 "My hat!"

The chums of the Fourth heard Lumley's yell and the fierce growling of Towser in the Form-room. Fellows in the common-room and the passages heard it. Reilly put his head into the Form-room excitedly.

"Faith, there's something up in your study!" he exclaimed.

Herries looked alarmed.
 "Somebody's disturbed Towser," he exclaimed angrily.

Reilly chuckled.
 "Sure, and if he has, he's sorry for it by this time, I should think," he said. "Hark to him, entirely!"

Herries rushed from the Form-room, followed by his friends. They joined a crowd of fellows who were dashing upstairs.

They reached the door of Study No. 6. Just as they did so it was thrown open, and the din was

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louder. There was a crashing of falling furniture, a savage growling of an angry dog, and the wild yells of a junior scared and startled almost out of his wits.

Lumley struggled through the doorway with Towser clinging to him

"My hat!" ejaculated Blake. "It's Lumley!"

"Help!"

"Bai Jove!"

Lumley-Lumley kicked furiously at Towser, and the bull-dog retreated for a moment. Lumley staggered and fell.

The next moment he sprang up again with a fiendish yell. He had sat down on the tacks!

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What is the matter with him?"

"Lumley——"

"What——"

"Gweat Scott!"

Lumley was shrieking with pain.

Herries dashed into the study. He caught Towser by the collar, and dragged him back as he would have leaped upon Lumley again.

The Outsider staggered from the study.

His face was deadly white, and he was gasping for breath. His hand clawed at his clothes, which were full of tacks, many of which had penetrated his flesh.

"My hat!" exclaimed Digby. "Tacks!"

"Tacks!"

"Bai Jove! Tacks, you know."

"What on earth——"

"I've been bitten!" said Lumley hoarsely.

"Bai Jove! I twust you will not get hydowphobia, deah boy."

"My word!"

"Hang you!" gasped Lumley. "Hang you all! You knew I was coming there, and you had that infernal dog ready for me."

"Nothing of the sort," said Blake. "I never thought you'd have the cheek to go into our study. What did you want?"

Herries had lighted the gas.

"He came here to play some trick on Towser, I'll be bound!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Ha, ha! Towser seems to have played the tricks."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But where did the tacks come from?" demanded Tom Merry. "Look there, the floor's covered with them! Lumley's got a lot sticking in his trucks, too."

"And what's that string tied across there for by one end?" said Lowther.

"Oh, I see it all now."

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah! Lumlay came here to play a wotten twick on us, and he found Towsah here, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he sat down on his own tacks!" roared Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled.

Jerrold Lumley was hurt, and by the way he was squirming and groaning, he seemed badly hurt, but it was hard to feel sympathy for him.

It was a case of the biter bitten—the engineer hoist by his own petard.

The juniors shouted with laughter. But the merriment died down as a stern voice was heard in the passage.

"What is this?"

It was Mr. Railton. The House-master of the School House frowned as he came upon the scene. He could see, of course, that Jerrold Lumley had been hurt, but that was all he knew, so far.

"What does this mean, boys? Explain, Merry."

"Yes, sir. It seems that Lumley has sat down on some tacks, sir."

"Tacks!"

"Tin-tacks, sir!"

"Tin-tacks," repeated Mr. Railton. "I hope none of you has been playing so ill-natured and dangerous a trick upon Lumley."

"Oh, no, sir."

"I twust, sir, that you would not suspect us of playin' such a wotten twick," said D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity.

"I hope not, D'Arcy; but a trick has been played——"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And Lumley is the victim?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Then who played the trick?"

"I'd rather you asked Lumley, sir."

Mr. Railton turned to the Outsider. Lumley was still twisting with pain, but he had succeeded in getting rid of the tacks by this time.

"Lumley, can you explain this?"

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"No, sir."

Lumley growled out the words.

"You have fallen upon some tacks?"

"Yes."

"Were they placed for you to fall on?"

"No, sir."

"It was an accident, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are hurt."

"Yes."

Mr. Railton's frown grew deeper and darker.

"This is not what I should have expected from the boys of my House," he said. "Lumley has suffered from a painful accident, and you were all laughing loudly when I came up. That is not the way you should act."

The juniors turned red.

They respected their House-master, and valued his opinion, and it was hard that they should appear cruel and ill-natured in his eyes.

"If you please, sir——" began Tom Merry.

"You told me that a trick had been played, Merry, while Lumley says that it was an accident," said Mr. Railton severely.

"It was——was both, sir."

"Both."

"Yes, sir."

"I do not see how that could be? And what has caused your clothes to become torn in that way, Lumley?" said Mr. Railton, beginning to think that he was on the track of a specially flagrant case of ragging, and mentally resolving to make it warm for the raggars if it proved to be so.

"It was that rotten dog, sir."

"What dog?"

"Herries' bulldog."

"You don't mean to say that the dog was set upon you?" Lumley hesitated.

He would gladly have said that such was the case, for he had not the slightest scruple about speaking falsely, and he dearly wished to get the chums of Study No. 6 into trouble.

But there were too many witnesses to the contrary for him to venture upon a statement to that effect.

"No, sir," he said.

"Then how did it happen?"

"If you please, sir. I haven't any complaint to make," said Lumley, beginning to wish, as the pain abated, that he had made less noise, and that he was well out of the affair. "It's all right, sir; I'm not much hurt."

"It is not all right," said Mr. Railton severely. "I must know the rights of this case. Herries, how did your dog come to attack Lumley? You assured me when you obtained permission to keep him in the house that he was quite safe, and could be relied upon to attack no one."

"So he is, sir."

"He has attacked Lumley."

"Lumley could tell you why, sir."

"Did you interfere with Herries' dog, Lumley?"

"No, sir."

"I do not know what to make of this. Ahem! What were you doing in this study at all, Lumley?"

The Outsider was silent.

Mr. Railton looked at him, and looked at Tom Merry & Co. Then he noted the tacks scattered on the floor, and the cord of which Lumley had already tied one end. The truth dawned upon his mind.

His brow hardened.

"You came here to lay a trap for these lads, I suppose, Lumley, and unexpectedly found the dog here," he said. "Is that it?"

The Outsider did not reply.

"You played the trick yourself, and by an accident you suffered by it, instead of your intended victims."

Still Jerrold did not speak.

"It was a cruel and cowardly trick to play," said Mr. Railton sternly. "If you had not been hurt already, I would give you a severe caning, Lumley. As it is, you may go, with the contempt you deserve."

The Outsider slunk away.

"Good old Railton!" said Jack Blake, when the House-master was gone. "I was afraid for a minute that he was going for us."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Jolly lucky how it's turned out," said Herries, with a deep sigh of relief, as he looked upon Towser's basket.

"Yes; we might all have been gated."

"Eh? I wasn't thinking of that. I mean, it's jolly lucky how it's turned out about Towser."

"Towser?"

"Yes. He might have trodden on some of the tacks, but he hasn't."

CHAPTER 16.

The Candid Friend.

"HOW'S Towser?"

That was the question all the fellows put to Herries whenever they met him.

The whole School House seemed to be taking the keenest interest in the progress of Towser.

Herries was pleased and flattered by it. He confided to Jack Blake that the fellows weren't such asses. Whereat Jack Blake winked into space, and agreed that they weren't.

Towser seemed to be progressing favourably.

He was feeding well, to judge by the amount of food Herries took to the study for him, and which did not reappear.

He had quite taken possession of the study now.

The chums of the Fourth not only did their prep. in the Form-room, and took their tea in Hall or other fellows' studies, but Herries had asked them if they could keep their props somewhere else; and so books and papers and cricket-bats and footers, and all sorts and conditions of things were transferred to Form-room lockers.

Herries seemed to be satisfied with that for a time.

But only for a time.

He reappeared before the public, so to speak, with a request that the Fourth Form would make less noise in their passage, as noise disturbed Towser, and was supposed to have an irritating effect upon his nerves.

The Fourth Form were so flabbergasted, as Reilly described it, by this modest request, that they didn't quite know what to say to Herries.

When they recovered their breath, they said things.

The things they said were not polite. Some of them collected outside Study No. 6, and amused themselves by kicking at the door, and stamping on the floor boards. That was to show the independence of the Fourth Form.

But Blake & Co. soon put a stop to that. They sympathised with Herries to some extent, and Blake remarked that, if they had given up their study to Towser, the least the other fellows could do was to let the bulldog be quiet there.

The others did not see it quite in that light at first, and the matter was argued out behind the chapel, and they came round.

But, as Monty Lowther put it, the sooner Rylcombe Dog Show was over the better, for the whole School House was getting fed up with Towser.

Meanwhile Towser was having a good time.

He lived on the fat of the land, and looked so fat and sleek that there was no doubt that, if there was a prize for averdu-
pois, Towser would take it.

It was a sore point with Wally that he did not receive so much encouragement as Herries did.

But Jameson and Curly Gibson wouldn't stand Pongo at any price.

When Wally proposed keeping him in a basket in the Form-room in the evenings, Jameson and Gibson and nearly all the Third Form rose in revolt.

"We won't have it," said Jameson. "The rotten brute would be sneaking all our grub, for one thing. You know the last time he was here he boned a herring."

"A herring I'd given three-ha'pence for, too," said Curly. Wally sniffed.

"It was pretty high, and Pongo never ate it," he said.

"I don't care whether he ate it or not. I know he took it—and I know he gnawed up one of my impots."

"I expect you'd have got it doubled for the rotten writing if he hadn't."

Jameson breathed deep.

"If you're looking for a thick ear, Wally—"

"Oh, rats!" said Wally. "I don't see why you don't like Pongo. Look what Herries' friends are doing for Towser."

"More duffers they."

"Yes, you said so yourself, Wally," remarked Curly.

"H'm," said Wally, "perhaps I did—but that was about Towser. Of course, it's a totally different matter with Pongo."

"Bosh!" said Jameson, with Third-Form politeness.

"Yes, rats!" added Gibson.

"Suppose I take first prize?" said Wally. "There's four quid for the best kept and handsomest dog, and there's no reason why Pongo shouldn't rope it. Think what a stunning feed that would mean."

"Well, yes, but—"

"Look here, I've got a proposition to make," said Wally—"a business proposition. I want you fellows to score over this dog-show."

"Go ahead!" said Jameson suspiciously.

"If Pongo takes the cake I'm going to divvy up, if you help me," said Wally. "Now, look here, suppose we have Pongo in the Form-room every evening, and look after him?"

"Rats!"

"Let me finish, you ass."

"Oh, go on!"

"Well, and suppose we club together our pocket-money to feed him up thoroughly well—"

"Our pocket-money!" gasped Jameson.

"To feed Pongo!" murmured Curly Gibson.

"Yes."

"Oh, he's off his rocker!" said Jameson, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Mad as a hatter! Madder than a March hare!"

"Look here, suppose we feed Pongo up, and make him fat and well, he's bound to take first prize—"

"Rats!"

"And many of 'em!"

"Then I'll divvy up the four quid."

"Lots of quids you'll have to divvy up!" sneered Jameson. "The prize is for a handsome dog. Do you call Pongo handsome?"

"Do you call him a dog?" Curly Gibson wanted to know.

Wally sniffed.

"Nice kind of chums you are for a fellow to have!" he exclaimed. "Look what sacrifices Blake and the others are making to help Herries get the prize!"

"Well, they're duffers and we're not. Besides, your rotten mongrel hasn't a ghost of an earthly, anyway," said Jameson, with friendly candour. "You don't seem to be able to see it, Wally, but Pongo is a regular tripe-hound. I'm telling you this as a friend, you know, to save you from being disappointed. Pongo is such an awful blighter that he's more likely to be chucked out of the show neck-and-crop than to get a prize. I—Ow, yow!"

Jameson left off speaking as a friend as Wally seized him by the collar and ran him up to a tree and knocked his head against it.

"Ow!" roared Jameson. "Leggo! Chuck it! Ow!"

"There!" panted Wally. "Speaking as a friend, I'd advise you to keep that grub-trap of yours shut up a bit. That's all."

And he gave Jameson a final shake, and left him gasping, and walked away whistling with his hands in his pockets.

"Ow!" gasped Jameson. "Fancy young Wally cutting up rusty like that because I spoke to him candidly as a friend! Ow!"

And it was some time before Jameson spoke to Wally as a candid friend again. But Pongo was not installed in the Form-room of an evening—neither did the chums of the Third club together their pocket-money to feed him on the fat of the land.

CHAPTER 17.

The Lancashire Lad's Strange Dog.

"WHERE'S Towser!" asked Jack Blake, looking into Study No. 6 on Saturday morning. The bulldog was not to be seen. The basket was empty, and Blake's dictionary lay on the table, and D'Arcy's tie-box could be seen under a chair.

"He's gone," said Herries.

"Gone!"

"Yes."

"Phew! The beast!" said Blake sympathetically. "What a sell! What a rotten, unreliable beast! I'm sorry!"

Herries glared at him.

"What are you sorry about, you ass?" he asked.

"Why, that rotten blughound bolting like this, on the day of the show! I suppose it's all U P now?"

"You chump! I mean he's gone to Rylcombe. He's been taken to the Dog Show," growled Herries.

"Oh, I see!"

"Wally has sent his rotten mongrel in, too," said Herries.

"I can't understand that kid's cheek!"

"I heard him say he couldn't understand yours."

"What!"

"I heard him say—"

"Oh, rats!"

Herries stalked away. Blake grinned, and went along to the end study in the Shell passage. He was curious about Bernard Glyn's dog. Kangaroo and Glyn and Clifton Dane were there, and they were all standing round the mastiff, looking at him. Blake looked in at the door.

"Oh, here you are!" he said. "Towser and Pongo have gone. Why haven't you sent Prince?"

"I'm taking him myself after school," said Glyn.

"You'll be late."

"That's all right—I've arranged it—and the adjudication isn't till five," said the junior inventor. "What do you think of Prince?"

"Looks all right," said Blake, eyeing the mastiff curiously.

"How still he sits!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling about?" demanded Blake, mystified.

Cornstalk & Co. roared.

"Oh, nothing!" said Kangaroo. "But a dog of Prince's breed always sits quite still."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Blake, walking away.

Morning lessons were a bore that Saturday to at least three fellows in the lower school at St. Jim's—Glyn of the Shell, Herries of the Fourth, and D'Arcy minor of the Third.

They were thinking of Rylcombe Dog Show, and of the wonderful animals they had to exhibit there.

Half St. Jim's was going to the Dog Show.

After school a steady stream of fellows set off in the direction of the village.

Herries started off early, to take another look at Towser—to make sure that the famous bulldog was in the pink of condition. Blake, Digby, and D'Arcy went with him. Wally was soon after him, with Jameson and Gibson. The latter two heroes of the Third Form openly declared that they did not take much interest in the show, and did not expect Pongo to get anything but jeers, but they were willing to go if Wally stood the tickets. And Wally said that if he could stand them, he supposed he could stand the tickets; so they went.

Bernard Glyn came out with his mastiff after dinner, and a great many fellows gathered round to look at Prince.

There was no doubt that he was a very fine dog; but, at the same time, there was something about him that was not natural.

Exactly what it was was hard to define, but he did not strike the observer as being exactly like other dogs.

The Terrible Three were on the spot when Glyn appeared. They came up to look at Prince. Bernard Glyn was helping him carefully into Taggles's trap, in which he was to be taken to Rylcombe.

The Liverpool lad was grinning serenely. He evidently anticipated great things of Prince.

"Looks in good form, doesn't he?" said Kangaroo.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes, he's quite up to Towser's form, I think."

"What-ho!" said Clifton Dane. "And he's not subject to any of Towser's little failings, either. Never had a disease in his life."

"Never knew what distemper was," said Kangaroo.

"Never had a pain in his inside."

"Never!" said Bernard Glyn solemnly.

"Well, he's a jolly good dog," said Tom Merry. "If you're sure he doesn't bite, we'll come in the trap with you to Rylcombe."

"Oh, come in! We can make room."

And six juniors crammed themselves into Taggles's trap with the mastiff, and it rolled down towards the school gates. Three youths stood there, and they stood in the way. They were Figgins & Co. of the New House.

"Got room for three more?" asked Figgins.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Tom Merry. "My dear chap, we haven't room for three white mice!"

"Well, three of you could get down," Kerr suggested.

"Four," said Fatty Wynn. "I don't want to be squeezed."

"Oh, come off!" said Kangaroo. "Let's get on."

"Down with the School-House bounders!" said Figgins.

The three New House fellows rushed at the trap.

Bernard Glyn lifted Prince's head over the backboard.

"Seize 'em!" he said.

In a second Figgins & Co. let go the trap and jumped back. "Yow!" said Figgins. "I didn't know you had that beast there! Look here—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The trap rattled on, leaving the heroes of the New House in the gateway.

"Good old Prince!" said Tom Merry, stroking the neck of the mastiff.

Glyn pushed his hand back quickly but too late! Tom Merry had stroked the neck, and in doing so he had made a discovery.

His face seemed to be petrified for a minute.

Then he gave a gasp.

"My hat!"

Bernard Glyn turned red.

"What an ass I was to let you in the trap!" he muttered. "You've bowled me out!"

"My word!"

"Keep it dark, then."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the joke?" asked Monty Lowther, in astonishment.

Tom Merry roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fathead!" exclaimed Manners. "What's the joke?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry's chums seized him and shook him. But the THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 136.

more they shook the more he laughed, until he seemed in danger of going into hysterics. Cornstalk & Co. were laughing, too, now; they couldn't help it.

"What's the wheeze?" roared Monty Lowther, exasperated. "What are you cackling at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Explain, you ass!"

"Stroke Prince!" gasped Tom Merry, at last. "Then you'll know. Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther, looking very perplexed, stroked the mastiff.

He jumped.

"My only hat!" he gasped.

"What the dickens—" began Manners.

"Stroke him!"

"But what—"

"Stroke him, and see—"

Manners obeyed. Then he, too, uttered an exclamation of amazement.

"My only hat! Who'd have thought it?"

"Keep it dark, that's all!" said Bernard Glyn.

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

And the chums of the Shell laughed in chorus.

It was a peculiar discovery that they had made; yet, knowing Bernard Glyn as they did, and remembering his former efforts as an inventor of strange contrivances, they felt that they might have guessed it.

In touching Prince, they did not touch the warm flesh of a healthy dog; there was no warmth and no pulsation there.

Prince was one more of Bernard Glyn's wonderful contrivances. To look at him, no one would have imagined it; but the touch betrayed him.

The mechanism was very nearly perfect, and the growls that mechanically issued from his throat when the string was jerked were very lifelike; but as soon as he was touched it was revealed that he was a lifeless mechanism.

"My only hat!" said Tom Merry, with a deep breath.

"And you've had the cheek to enter that blessed machine at the Dog Show!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, it's a jape," said Glyn. "If he takes a prize I sha'n't accept it—I shall explain. But I don't suppose it will go as far as that. Prince will be bowled out—but until he is—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Shell roared again, as the trap rolled up to the building in Rylcombe where the Dog Show was being held.

CHAPTER 18.

Glyn Does Not Take the Prize.

HERRIES met Tom Merry as the latter came in with his chums. Herries was looking very satisfied and cheerful. He gave the Terrible Three a pleasant nod.

"It's all right!" he announced.

"What's all right?"

"Towser."

"Oh!"

"He's in ripping condition," said Herries. "Looks as right as rain. I heard one of the adjudicators remark that that was a very fine bulldog."

"Joking, I suppose," suggested Lowther.

Herries glared, but in the cause of peace let the subject drop.

The Dog Show was very popular, and there were a good many exhibits, and as it was a Saturday afternoon, there was a goodly crowd to view them.

The juniors of St. Jim's spent a very pleasant hour or two in inspecting the animals, and discussing their merits. Herries, who was not usually talkative, talked all the time. He talked dogs. Dogs in general, and Towser in particular, formed the burden of his song. Herries knew all about dogs of all sorts and conditions, and he explained at great length that a bulldog was really the finest kind of a dog, and that Towser was really the finest kind of a bulldog.

The juniors were very patient. As Blake remarked, sotto voce, it was no worse than Gussy on the subject of neckties and silk hats.

"By the way, is Glyn's beast here?" Herries asked presently.

Tom Merry grinned.

"Yes, rather!" he said. "Glyn brought it along. He can tell you where it is now. Here's Glyn!"

Bernard Glyn came up, and nodded cheerfully to the chums. There was a curious twinkle in his eyes, of which Tom Merry knew the meaning now.

"Hallo, you're here, are you?" said Wally, coming up with Jameson and Gibson. "You two chaps have really had

sheek to show up those two tripehounds. One of the adjudicators has been looking at Pongo. It's Major Watson, and you know he knows a lot about dogs. I heard him say that he didn't expect to see a dog like Pongo here. Shows what he thinks of Pong!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It does!"

"He was surprised to see so fine an animal," Wally explained hastily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Begad!" said a wheezy voice near the juniors. "That's a good dog—a very good dog indeed! Begad!"

The chums turned round quickly. It was Major Watson, a white-whiskered old gentleman, who spoke, and he was regarding Prince through an eyeglass. He seemed to be very much interested in Prince, who lay with one eye partly open, in a very reposeful attitude.

Certainly Prince looked a very handsome dog.

Herries suppressed a scornful sniff.

"Blessed if I know what he can see in that thing," he whispered to Blake. Whereat Jack Blake grinned and said nothing.

"Begad! Whose dog is that, I wonder?" said the gentleman.

"Mine, if you please, sir," said Bernard Glyn softly.

"Ah, yours!" said the major, turning his eyeglass upon the Liverpool lad. "Good! A very fine dog, my boy. How long have you had him?"

"Three or four days, sir."

"Oh! How old is he?"

"Three or four days, sir—I—I mean—I——" Glyn stammered.

"Oh, you don't know! Well, he's a fine dog, and well kept, too," said the major. "He— Begad, come here, you rascal—come here! Good dog!"

Prince did not move.

"Good dog! Good doggy! Come here!"

Glyn moved forward.

"He's a little shy with strangers, sir," he said, stooping over Prince, and stroking his neck. "Now, then, Prince—good dog—"

Something clicked faintly inside the mechanical dog, and Prince rose to his feet, and his mouth opened a little wider. He growled.

"Begad!" said the major. "Bad-tempered—eh?"

"Oh, no, sir! That's his little way!"

"Good dog! Come here! Hi!"

Prince walked towards the major. The latter looked a little puzzled. There was something he did not quite understand about Prince's movements. But certainly he looked a very fine dog.

The major stooped to pat his head. Glyn exchanged a hopeless look with the chums of the Shell. All the fat would be in the fire now.

Major Watson patted Prince—and started. He patted him again—and then stroked him. His face was a study.

"Begad," he murmured—"begad!"

"Do you like him, sir?" asked Glyn cheerfully.

"What the dooce—what's the matter—am I dreaming?" murmured the major. "What's the matter with the dog, boy?"

"Matter, sir?"

"Yes, matter! It's cold—cold as—as a dead dog, sir, and it's not alive!" ejaculated the major, with starting eyes.

"What—what—what— Begad!"

He backed away from the mastiff. Prince walked on solemnly towards him. The major backed further away, alarm mingled with astonishment in his face. He was evidently thrown completely off his balance.

He had backed to the wall, and could go no further. A hundred eyes were on the scene now. Prince still walked towards the major. He looked quiet enough, but the major had made the discovery that he was not alive, and so the major did not regard him as the other spectators did. Major Watson grasped his cane, and raised it in defence.

Bernard Glyn, alarmed for his dog, ran forward.

"Hold on, sir!"

It was too late.

The cane descended with a crash upon Prince.

The dog did not howl, as might have been expected. No sound came from his mouth, but from his body came a curious whirring sound.

The spectators gasped.

"My hat!" yelled Blake. "I know it now—it's a jape!"

"Bai Jove! It's another of that boundah's blessed machines."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The blow on the dog's back had evidently disarranged the mechanism. Prince broke into a run, and ran straight at the wall, just missing the major as he jumped aside. Major Watson did not stand upon his dignity—he ran. Prince

butted his head into the wall, receding and rushing on again, impelled by the mechanism within; and then, slanting off after a crash on the wall, he rushed among the crowd.

There was a wild alarm at once.

The general impression was that the mastiff was mad, and a cry arose:

"Mad dog!"

There was a rush to escape.

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped Blake. "There will be a row over this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The mechanical mastiff rushed on, scattering the crowd like chaff. Glyn rushed in pursuit, but the mechanism was fairly running away now, and was too quick for him. An open doorway lay before Prince, and he charged through it, scattering the people before him, and scuttled down a wide flagged corridor, where a great doorway and a flight of steps gave access to the street.

After him went the juniors at top speed, bent upon capturing him before he could do further damage.

Prince rolled down the steps into the street, and lay for some moments on his back, his legs wildly working in the air, like an overturned beetle.

Then he fell upon his side, and as Glyn rushed up and grasped him, the mechanism recovered itself, and Prince was off again.

There was a loud whirring and ticking from within him. Glyn held on to the leash for a moment, but before he could tighten his grasp it was jerked from his hand, and Prince was gone.

"Stop him!" shouted Tom Merry.

"I—I can't!" gasped Bernard Glyn.

"Can't you turn a handle or press a button, or something?" demanded Lowther, who had rather hazy notions about machinery.

"He won't stop till he's run down."

"Phew!"

The juniors rushed after the mechanical mastiff. A stray dog outside Mrs. Murphy's tuckshop caught sight of him, and rushed to encounter him. He seized Prince and rolled over with him in combat. But only for a moment. Like Pongo and Towser, he was struck by something unnatural about Glyn's mastiff, and he let go with a whine of terror and ran. But he had upset the mastiff, and the juniors rushed up and secured it before it could get going again.

"My only hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "You'd better get this out of sight, and keep it deadly dark—or there will be a row."

And they did.

That was the most exciting incident at Rylcombe Dog Show. Bernard, Glyn's exhibit, had made the greatest sensation, but Herries took first prize.

Herries did not seem to be surprised when he received it. He was pleased. But, as he explained, he had expected it.

As a matter of fact, there was nothing else to be expected; for—as Herries said—was there another dog there so well-fed, well-kept, and handsome as Towser? Herries asked that as if it were an unanswerable conundrum, and the chums of the School House gave it up.

The really surprised person was Wally. He was simply astounded.

Pongo was not, perhaps, entitled to take a prize on a point of pure breed, or anything of that sort. But as a well-kept and handsome dog, Pongo ought to have taken the biscuit, as Wally was ready to maintain, with or without gloves, at all times.

"It was just what I expected," said Jameson, with a sniff. "They were surprised at your cheek in exhibiting such a blessed freak. "Here, hands off!"

"It was your fault," said Wally wrathfully.

"My fault! How do you make that out?"

"If you and Curly had clubbed together, as I suggested, and we had given Pongo a really good time, he'd have taken the prize."

"Rats!"

"Well, it means four quid wasted, and a big feed lost," said Wally. "Serve you right; I don't lose much, as I'm going to Herries's feed, with my major."

And Wally did justice to the feed that was stood in Study No. 6, in honour of Herries having taken the prize. He explained to Herries that as a matter of fact Pongo ought to have scored; and Herries received that explanation with unusual patience. He could afford to do so, in the serene consciousness of having taken the first prize for Towser.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete school tale of Tom Merry & Co., next Thursday, entitled "Lumley-Lumley's Rival," by Martin Clifford. Please order your copy of THE GEM LIBRARY in advance. Price One Penny.)

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NEXT THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL"

A Wonderful New Series of Nature Stories.

MANY SURPRISES.

By F. ST. MARS.

IF he had been rolled by a roller he might have looked no different to what he did. He had not, though. It was natural; natural for him to grow a body, long and sinuous, of about twelve inches; natural, also, to have legs so short that they scarcely held him clear of the ground, and he had to arch his body upwards in the middle because there was no room to arch it downwards. Teeth he had like baby daggers, eyes like black stars, a neck like the neck of a snake, and a head flat as a wedge. His colour was brown, but he wore a white waistcoat, and he knew no real fear. He was a stoat, and the same is of all the wood-folk the most bloodthirsty.

He swung out of the late afternoon sunshine at a hand-gallop, and dived into the silent shade of the wood. He was on the trail of a rabbit. He tracked it as a hound would, but much more certainly, and he said nothing at all about it all the time, so that if it had not been for the little Jenny wren who, fluttering high from reach, swore at him continuously in most unprintable language, you would never have known he was there at all.

Now, there are rabbits and rabbits. Nine out of ten are frightened of their own shadows. The tenth has young ones—look out!

The stoat's line led him to a clearing—the clearing to a hole. Certainly he ought to have thought before he entered the hole, but victory had been his so long that he did not.

The stoat went down into the hole.

The stoat came up out of the hole.

The interval between the going down and coming out again was about three-fifths of a second. He went down fairly quickly. He came out as if fired from a gun. He had struck the tenth rabbit, the lady who had young ones to attend to. She was quite mad as regards these young. She came at him like a battering-ram, she used her nails as if she had fifty pairs of them, she bowled him over, hurled him out, shot after him, knocked the wind out of him at least twenty times in ten seconds, and vanished back into her hole again all in less than a man would take to draw a long breath in.

As for the stoat, he went away quickly. He had never been faced by any creature smaller than a fox before, and as for rabbits—pough! Why, he killed them daily.

Presently, as the afternoon sun sank low, the stoat, peering from a screen of brambles, marked down a rat—just an ordinary brown rat, the same as he slew for a pastime any good hunting day—squatting cleaning its face at the mouth of a hole. He watched it till the bats came out and hovered about, and the mists began to rise, when it went in. He followed, knowing not then that this rat, like the rabbit, had young ones inside the hole.

It is presumed that they met half-way in, but what exactly the rat said to the stoat or he to the rat is not known. He came out again like a man who, entering a field, discovers a bull therein, and he looked worried. There was a long, red gash across his shoulder, and his right ear looked like a biscuit after a puppy has been chewing at it.

He ran away down a narrow rabbit-run jibbering with rage, and looking for something to vent his temper upon, and straightway he saw some beast coming up the path towards him.

Stoats don't stop to stand aside for anything less formidable than a dog or cat. They know their dread power. This animal was about as big as a good-sized rat, though rounder, and he walked as if he might get there to-morrow, or next year.

The stoat kept on. So did the other beast. The result was two grinning snouts touching each other, and two sets of glistening little fangs nearly clashing. The stoat was amazed, and stopped dead. How could anything dare to confront him in this way? Infamous! He would have its blood. His little, beady eyes grew red at the thought. He bristled, and began a horrible kind of swearing chatter. The last two were meant to terrify. Never before had he known them fail, but they failed now.

The other beast turned up his snout, which was upturned insolent and vulgar like a pig's, and he regarded the stoat calmly and without hurry with insolent, little piglike eyes.

Then, as the stoat sprang at him—sprang to kill, he rolled himself up into a ball with amazing speed; in no longer time than it takes one to wink, in fact.

The stoat landed—landed true to a hair on the back of THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 136.

the neck, the deadly spot where he was wont to deliver his lightning-like death bite, which, severing the spine, slew always with awful certainty. This was his patent method, one peculiarly his own and that of other stoats. It never failed, and because it never failed he was held in such great fear.

Something, however, went wrong with the works this time. The diabolical trick did not seem to come off quite. The stoat certainly bit, but he let forth instantly a yell which was certainly not triumph. It was pain, and he sprang off that beast as if he had landed upon red-hot coals. He had not, but he had done almost as bad. He had landed upon spikes sharp as needles, hundreds of them, and they stuck out all over this strange beast rolled up like a ball with never so much as room enough between to poke a thin stick. The amazement of the stoat was beautiful to behold, and as for the other beast, the spiked ball, he took it so calmly that one almost expected him to say "Ever been had?"

Now, that stoat, strange to say, had never met a hedgehog before. They were scarce in those parts. If he had he would have known that the prickly gentleman was a hedgehog. Now, all the wild folk who have once been introduced to one know that he who plays the goat with a hedgehog is likely to have a somewhat anxious time. There is no change to be got out of the hedgehog—only punctures. The wild folk pass him by on the other side pretending not to see, and he knows his power and chooses his path and holds it, turning aside for none, hurrying himself for none; not even for the fox, the cat, or the dog.

The stoat knew nothing of these things. He stared at the hedgehog for a moment in dumb fury, and then, because stoats are among the bravest of the brave, flew at him again. He was pricked on the nose and the lips and the gums, and the tongue and the feet and the chest, and it hurt, but he did not produce any impression on the enemy at all. It was most like charging a pin-cushion with the pins turned the wrong way, and a very full pin-cushion at that.

The stoat danced and swore and raved and shook the blood out of his eyes—his own blood, not the hedgehog's—and flew at the foe again and again. Each time he got more and more red, and—that was all. He had not even scratched the hedgehog yet.

Then at last he saw sense and went away, perplexed, savage, and gory. He went right away, and camped in a blackberry-bush to lick his wounds. As for the hedgehog, he waited for ten minutes, and then cautiously partly unrolled. He took a long peep to see if the coast was clear, then unrolled the rest of himself and coolly and sedately strolled off. Without undue haste he went, because, after all, what is the use of being adorned with a coat of a thousand spikes if you have to hurry yourself?

When the stoat had smoothed his fur—but not his temper—and removed most of the blood that oozed from his hundred-and-one punctures, he sallied forth again. So far this night had not produced much in the way of food, and he was getting hungry as well as exceedingly angry. His patience, at no time comparable with that of our friend Job, had run out completely, and it looked as if it would be very uncomfortable for the next wild folk he met.

So he passed through the undergrowth two hours after the hedgehog incident. There was by then a full moon, and the pale light filtering down between the boughs revealed him as he passed. He came to a rabbit warren and ran noiselessly in. He slew three rabbits in as many minutes out of sheer sport, or anger, and threw that warren into a state of panic such as would seize a hotel were it on fire. Rabbits came rushing out of every hole, and bolted blindly.

Then the strange thing occurred. The confusion and panic attracted the notice of a passing poacher's dog, and a big buck rabbit, terrified almost into a fit by the mere smell of the stoat, and dashing blindly along a run, ran nearly into the lurcher dog. The rabbit spun like a top, and tore back again for his life. Behind, the lurcher dog stretched at full gallop gnashed his jaws within an inch of bunny's tail. Straight for the nearest hole pelted the rabbit, blindly, and like a little bullet. He saw nothing of the rabbit which had just rushed out of that hole; was too terrified to guess that the stoat must be hard on that other rabbit's heels.

He ducked his head as he dived in at full speed, and—there was a crack exactly as if someone had dropped an egg. The rabbit rolled clean over something, some animal which he had struck with his head just as it was in the act of coming out of the hole. The animal was the stoat, and the rabbit had broken the stoat's neck. The rabbit raced on, and left behind him dead the very beast of which he was more frightened than any living thing on earth.

THE END.

(Another of these wonderful little stories next Thursday.)

NEXT THURSDAY.

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL."

Another Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.

You can Start Reading this Story now.



Read this First.

Oswald Yorke, one-time knight of the road, joins the Navy as a midshipman under the name of John Smith. His first ship, the frigate *Catapult*, is wrecked under peculiar circumstances, and Oswald is one of the few survivors. A naval court is held at Jamaica to inquire into the loss of the frigate, and Captain Burgoyne, the *Catapult's* scoundrelly commander, gives evidence which is subsequently proved to be false. He is placed under arrest with Brabazon, but as he leaves the court he publicly accuses Oswald of being a highwayman. The admiral, who knows Oswald's history, appoints him to the frigate *Fireball*, which is just about to sail. A boat is, therefore, sent from the *Fireball* to the *Cynthia* to fetch Oswald.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Admiral's kindness to Oswald.

Maxwell was on deck when Oswald, in the company of the middy from the *Fireball*, came up.

"Hallo!" he said. "Have they released you, then, Smith?"

"Yes," said Oswald.

"Quite right. But where are you off to?"

"To the *Fireball*—Captain Turnbull's ship," said Oswald. Maxwell whistled.

"You are in luck's way!"

"I don't know so much about that," said the *Fireball* midddy. "Old Peter can be a rare old Tartar when he likes."

"For all that," said Maxwell, "I shall apply to be sent on your frigate, too."

"I dare say it will be all right. We are short-handed. Two of our chaps got killed in the last engagement."

Maxwell nodded.

"All right; you'll see me aboard before long."

But Maxwell was doomed to disappointment. He applied to the admiral, and also to Captain Turnbull, but leave to join the *Fireball* was refused him.

"I believe Captain Garvin has already rated you to the *Cynthia*," said the admiral. "In any case, you could not sail with the *Fireball*, as your evidence at the court-martial will be required."

It was a disappointment to Maxwell, and to Oswald, too, for the two had become the closest of friends.

"Never mind, old chap; we shall run alongside each other one of these days soon," said Maxwell. "You are well out of this beastly court-martial. I can't think why they have let you go, and keep me. I wonder"—he paused—"I wonder if what Burgoyne said about, you know what, has anything to do with it? It looks as if the admiral was hurrying you out of the way."

"I am sure of it," said Oswald. "It is only one more kindness that he has done for me."

"He is a jolly good old sort!" said Maxwell.

The next morning the *Fireball* sailed. Captain Turnbull's orders were to cruise in the neighbourhood of the island of San Andrae to watch for the two pirates, engage with them, and, if possible, recapture or sink the *Rattler*.

"I cannot but feel assured," the admiral had said, "that this man Wilson, the planter, had some hand in the massacre

of the *Rattler's* crew. The island seems to be a resort for the pirates. You will do well if you capture, at any rate, some of the pirate crew alive, in order that we may get their evidence, and bring home the crime to Wilson."

The *Fireball* was a smaller frigate than the *Cynthia*, but one of the fleetest frigates afloat. There were only two midshipmen aboard besides Oswald—the middy who had come aboard the *Cynthia* with Captain Turnbull's letter. Jackson, who, though young as he was, already carried on his face several scars received in some of the numerous engagements he had seen while on board the *Fireball*. The other was Cospatrick, a big, red-headed Irish lad, who spent one half his life thinking out practical jokes, and the other half in playing them.

He was a good-natured fellow, without a spice of malice in his composition, and his jokes for the most part were of a very harmless description.

Oswald in a very short time found himself on very friendly terms with both his new messmates.

On the first day out from Kingston, Captain Turnbull sent for Oswald to his cabin.

"You may perhaps have wondered at the reason for your being sent on aboard this ship while your former comrades are obliged to stay behind to give their evidence before the court-martial?" he began.

Oswald made no reply.

"I may say that the admiral has taken me completely into his confidence with regard to yourself, Smith. He has told me the whole story of the meeting between you and him—in confidence; a confidence that I am not likely to betray. He believes in you; he thinks you are capable, brave, and trustworthy. He takes a great interest in your career, and will always prove your friend so long as you are deserving. I also have faith in you, and I do not think that you will prove ungrateful for the kindness that has been shown you. From to-day we will agree to never speak of the past. It is the future that we must think of. I shall watch your behaviour, and if I find that you do well, you may rely on it that your friend the admiral shall be kept well informed of your progress."

"I will do my best, sir, to deserve the great kindness that the admiral has shown me," said Oswald.

Captain Turnbull nodded gravely.

"You cannot do better than your best; it is all that is expected of you. You will dine with me to-night. My compliments to Mr. Cospatrick also, and say that I shall be glad of his company at dinner. Mr. Jackson will be on duty, I believe?"

There were present at dinner that night, besides Captain Turnbull and the two midgies, the ship's surgeon—a tall, thin, angular man—a Scotchman by birth—who took snuff, and had a bad habit of rubbing the end of his long nose with the back of his hand whenever he became excited. He was a good-natured, well-meaning man, who delighted in his profession.

The other guest at the captain's table was the first-lieutenant, Mr. Patch, a stout man with a voice like a foghorn. He was extremely deaf, and, like most deaf people, he had got into the habit of roaring rather than speaking—being

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NEXT THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S RIVAL"

probably under the impression that because he was deaf all the rest of the world was deaf, too.

A strict disciplinarian, almost a martinet, Captain Turnbull could yet unbend on occasions, and at his own dinner-table a more genial and pleasanter host could not be desired.

"I don't think you have met Mr. Smith, Dr. McAndrew," he said.

The surgeon extended a bony claw.

"I'm vera pleased to see you, young sir," he said.

"Mr. Smith was on board the Catapult, you know," went on the captain. "He was a prisoner, or perhaps a guest, on the brig commanded by that rascal we are now in search of."

"Ah, that's vera interesting indeed!" said the surgeon.

"And what sort of looking man is this Kester?" asked the captain.

Oswald described the pirate minutely, while both the doctor and Mr. Patch listened attentively.

"And ye say that his face is white—without a colour?" asked the surgeon. "That means he's been in confinement—a prisoner, the scoundrel!"

"Yes; a schooner, and a remarkably fine little craft, too; the Catawumpa, she was named," asserted Mr. Patch. "Her captain—"

"Will you take a glass of sherry with me, Mr. Patch?" said the captain.

"With pleasure!" said Mr. Patch, so readily that Cospatrik laughed outright.

The surgeon reached out his claw and gripped Cospatrik's pulse.

"A trifle hysterical," he said. "Pit oot your tongue! A vera pair tongue—a pair tongue, indeed!" he said, shaking his head mournfully. "Come to me in the morning, laddie, and I'll let a wee drop of your bluid!"

"You—you don't say so!" gasped Mr. Patch, rising hastily to his feet. "I thought—upon my soul, I thought—the moment he entered that there was a strange look about him. This cursed climate—this cursed climate—"

"What's the matter the noo?" asked the surgeon. "Can't he be still for a minute?"

"In the midst of life we are in death," said Mr. Patch. "Well, well, it can't be helped, poor lad! I'm sorry for him—doosed sorry! Terrible scourge, this malaria!"

"You never seem to get away from it," said the surgeon. "The pair fule is it again!"

Mr. Patch seemed surprised that Cospatrik, whom he imagined was suffering from this deadly complaint, remained at table; but he said no more, though he kept glancing in the boy's direction, and shaking his head mournfully.

All this was very pleasant for Cospatrik, who, somehow, did not enjoy his dinner.

"If any stranger was to come on board and visit the captain's cabin when the first luff and the doctor are there, he would think we had shipped a cargo of lunatics!" he said to Oswald, as they went out.

The evening of the following day they sighted the island of San Andrade.

Before sunset the Fireball had dropped anchor in the little bay off the island of San Andrade, almost precisely on the identical spot where the ill-fated Rattler had been moored.

Captain Turnbull stood leaning over the rails, taking a long look at the island before the daylight faded and shut it out from view.

"Cospatrik, ask Mr. Smith to come up here," he said.

The sun by this time had sunk below the horizon and night was fast settling down. It had already grown dark when Oswald joined the captain on the quarter-deck.

"You know this island better than I do. That, I suppose, is the house of this Mr. Wilson?" asked the captain, pointing to the distant house.

"Yes, sir; that—"

Oswald stopped suddenly.

"What is it—what is it?" asked the captain quickly.

"Didn't you see, sir—that light—a bright blue flash? It looked like a signal of some kind from the house. I saw it the moment I was speaking to you."

"A signal! Who can they be signalling to?" said the captain.

"By thunder, I wonder if it is possible that those rascals are lying off the other side of the island? How far does the island extend beyond the house on the other side?"

"Not more than a mile, sir."

"That's it, depend on it—that's it!" said the captain quickly. "They are signalling from the house to warn the pirates of our presence. Mr. Handyside"—this to the second lieutenant—"make all preparations to lower the two outiers and the gig. Pick your crews, and arm them with muskets and cutlasses. There will be work for us to do before the sun rises again. There, good gad, there goes that blue flash again! I saw it that time distinctly."

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NEXT THURSDAY: "HERRIES' 1ST PRIZE."

Oswald Loses His Boat—Kester—The Alarm—A Prisoner—A Blow.

Twice more the signalling lights from the house among the trees were noticed, and the impatience of the men on the Fireball grew.

"Do you know the coast hereabouts, Mr. Smith?" asked Handyside, the second luff.

"Fairly well, I think, sir," replied Oswald.

"Well enough to guide us?"

"I think so. There is a good landing-place on the rocks. I think I could steer you there."

"All right. You take command of the gig, and lead the way. I'll follow in the big cutter, and Cospatrik here can bring up the rear."

"All right, sor!" said Cospatrik. "It's a place ather me own heart."

"No nonsense!" said Mr. Handyside sternly. "Stand by your boats, lads! Are you all ready? Lower away!"

The three boats descended from the Fireball's side, and in a few moments her eager crew had tumbled into them.

Darkness had by this time fallen, and a darkness so intense that when even but a few yards away from the Fireball she had vanished utterly from their sight. On the shore a few lights could be seen twinkling among the trees, and these were all that Oswald had to guide him.

Keeping the lights on his right, he steered his boat, while the crew pulled with muffled oars. Not a sound broke the stillness but the soft lap-lap of the waves against the shore. This sound and the lights on shore were all that Oswald had to guide him. Ahead and astern all was blackness.

"There's the devil's own current agen us, sir!" whispered one of the men in an undertone. "We ain't making any headway."

"I can't understand it. I thought not, judging from the position of the lights. They haven't changed for a quarter of an hour or more. I am afraid I have lost my bearings," muttered Oswald.

The next moment the boat struck something with a force that sent some of the men staggering forward. There was a sharp, rasping, splitting sound, as several of the planks in the bottom of the boat were wrenched out, and the water came swirling in.

"Keep your ammunition dry if you can," ordered Oswald hurriedly. "I fancy we are close in shore, and can wade to dry land. Steady!" he added, raising his voice. "We've run ashore. The boat is damaged, and we shall have to wade or swim for the island."

"Confound the luck!" came out of the darkness in Mr. Handyside's voice.

By this time Oswald and his men found themselves standing in water up to their middles.

"Are you in any danger?" asked Mr. Handyside.

"I think not, sir. We are all standing on the bottom. We'll try and get ashore, and meet you on the other side of the island. I know my way on land better than around the coast."

Mr. Handyside swore under his breath.

"All right," he said aloud. "Go carefully. Don't let anyone see you if you can help it. Perhaps it will be just as well to have a force on land as well. I hope to goodness we don't come to grief too."

Splashing through the water, Oswald followed his men towards the shore. At every step the water grew more and more shallow, and in a few minutes they were on dry ground.

"It's plaguey dark!" muttered one of the men. "Give me broad daylight, I—"

"Silence! Not a word, and follow me. I know my way now pretty well," said Oswald. "Keep close, or we shall lose one another. Are your arms and ammunition all right?"

"As dry as me throat, sir!" said one.

"All right. Now, silently, my lads."

Oswald led the way, and the men trudged along behind him, swearing softly as every now and again one stepped into a hole and measured his length on the sand.

It was Oswald's intention to skirt the house and make for the other side of the island. He shared Captain Turnbull's belief that one, if not both, of the pirate vessels were in the neighbourhood, and there was a probability that some of the pirates themselves had come ashore.

The signalling lights had puzzled Oswald. If the vessels had been at anchor off the island, the signal had probably been made to warn them of the approach of the Fireball, in which case by this time the pirates would have weighed anchor and stolen out to sea. On the other hand, they might have been for some other purpose—perhaps to give the pirates an idea of the enemy's strength, in which case two well-armed pirates might well stay and offer resistance to a small frigate of the type of the Fireball.

They had by this time ascended the mound, and were making their way through the trees, keeping the house on their right. Lights were shining from many of the windows of the house, and the jangling notes of a piano sounded discordant and out of place. There was something almost uncanny about the music of this homely instrument amidst such surroundings.

Oswald paused for a moment, and looked eagerly towards the house. He guessed shrewdly who the performer was, and for the first time he felt that his errand was distasteful to him. What if they learned to-night beyond all doubt that the Wilsons were in league with Kester and Hutt? Perhaps the girl Norah might be implicated too. He felt sure that she, at any rate, was innocent. His train of thought was interrupted by one of the men.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but there seems to be company up at the house yonder. Look at the shadders on them jalousies. I've counted more'n a dozen the last five minutes."

"Hist!" whispered Oswald. "Down amongst the grass, quickly!" he added, as a tall figure suddenly appeared between them and the lights of the house.

Unconscious of their presence, the new-comer strode towards them, singing to himself in a low voice the same air that they had heard from the piano. A moment more and he had passed them, almost touching Oswald in the darkness.

It was Kester. Oswald recognised the man's low, musical voice in a moment. Kester coming from the Wilsons' house! The last doubt about the complicity died away.

For the moment the idea of attacking and securing Kester occurred to him, but he knew the man too well. He knew that it would mean a hard and stubborn fight that would give warning of the presence to all the others. They might succeed in capturing Kester, but it would mean that the rest would profit by the alarm and escape.

And even while he was debating the question in his own mind, Kester had vanished into the blackness, and the music of his voice had died away among the trees.

"There is no doubt about it. Many of the pirates are in the house," Oswald whispered. "It will be well to know for certain. You stay here, and I will creep up and find out what I can. Don't move hand or foot. Don't show yourself to anyone who may pass. Keep quiet!"

He crept away on hands and knees towards the house, leaving the half-dozen men crouching in the grass.

The player—Norah Wilson, he was sure of it—was playing an air from one of the most popular of the Italian operas. Louder and louder grew the notes of the instrument as he approached the house.

From within the house, mingled with the music, came the hum of voices. He had gained the clearing, and, creeping forward on hands and knees, was drawing near to one of the windows. In a moment he would be able to see into the room, and—

Crack!
With startling suddenness a report rang out. It sounded from behind him, and in a moment he guessed that one of his men had inadvertently fired off his piece. The effect was instantaneous. The piano stopped with sudden discordant jangling of notes, and the next instant half a dozen dark figures sprang out of the house.

There was no time for anything. Concealment was now out of the question. Oswald rose and half turned to run and rejoin his comrades, but he was already seen.

There was a flash from a pistol, a report, and a bullet sped past his ear. The first shot was followed instantly by another. He was not struck yet—not even by a third shot—but as he plunged into the thicket his foot caught in a dense tangle of the undergrowth, and he reeled forward and fell on his face.

It was this accident that probably saved his life, for as he fell a perfect fusillade of bullets was poured on him from the house, and the bullets went flying over him.

Quickly extricating his foot, he tried to rise, but as he did so a pair of hands gripped his throat from behind, and he was borne down to the earth, choking and struggling.

Scarcely sensible of what was going on around him, he felt himself being dragged quickly over the uneven ground, the terrible grip on his throat never relaxing for a moment.

A bullet hit the ground beside him, and spattered dust up into his eyes. For now the men he had left in ambush were firing at the dark figures outlined against the lights from the house, with a will.

For some moments the pirates returned the shots. Then suddenly they broke, and ran towards the shore on the farther side of the island from where the Fireball lay, keeping up a running fire as they ran with the sailors, who were evidently following them in the darkness.

Dragged into the lighted room, Oswald felt himself flung heavily on to the floor.

"It's that cursed midshipman!" muttered a voice that he recognised instantly.

The next moment another voice, which he recognised also, cried out:

"Joseph, what are you going to do? No, no; you shall not murder him!"

Still half dazed, he could see a figure, clad in white, trying to wrest something out of the hand of the man who had captured him, and who was standing over him now.

Then the next instant the struggle was interrupted.

"Quiet, you fool!" said a hoarse voice. "Quiet! The man-o-war's men will be on us in a moment. Get this brat out of sight!"

Oswald heard the click of a lock, and the next moment he was lifted up and flung headlong into a dark, cold place—a small cellar it seemed to be.

"Wait!" cried Joseph Wilson. "If they come he'll kick at the door and shout. Let me quieten him first."

"If you kill him I will tell all! I will betray you! I will tell—tell that you are in league—"

There was the sound of an oath, followed by a blow—a blow that made Oswald's blood leap in his veins, that brought back his consciousness and strength. She had defended him, and she had been struck by her brutal relatives. They had struck her—a girl. With clenched teeth and whirling head he leaped to his feet, but as he did so a stunning blow on the head laid him low, and then came blackness, insensibility.

Old Wilson's Strange Tale—Oswald's Danger.

Down on the shore a brief but terrible fight had taken place. The pirates, outnumbering the crews of the Fireball's boats as three to one, had taken to their boats, and in the darkness had successfully made for their vessels, which lay moored off the shore, leaving many of their number dead on the foreshore.

Many of the crews of the boats had also fallen, and in the darkness, with only two boats at his command, and with a crew greatly diminished, Mr. Handyside dared not push the fight further. It was not cowardice, but wisdom and discretion that prompted him, for on board their own ship the pirates could train their guns on his boats, and send them to the bottom before they could effect a boarding.

"Push up on to the house," said the lieutenant. "Some of these villains may yet be left inside. Now, my lads, at the double!"

The panting and perspiring sailors dashed up the hill, but all was quiet within the house. The lights were still burning brightly, but not a sound broke the stillness of the night.

Outside Mr. Handyside paused, fearing treachery. Then, banishing his fears, he sprang into the lighted room, with a pistol in one hand, and a cutlass in the other.

For a moment the lieutenant and the men who had followed him stood lost in astonishment at the sight that met their view.

The room was in the wildest disorder. On a couch near the window a young and beautiful girl lay, with her hands tightly bound together, and the mark of a bruise on her fresh, pale cheek. In a chair an elderly man sat, bound hand and foot; while on the floor, lying face downwards, was the body of a young man, apparently dead.

"Thank Heaven, you have come at last, gentlemen! Too late, I fear!" cried the old man in the chair.

He held out his bound hands, and in a few moments Mr. Handyside had removed his cords.

"Thank Heaven you have come!" repeated the old man. "In time to spare my worthless life, but not to save the life of one—Ah!"

He broke off with a sudden cry, and fell on his knees beside the body of the young man.

It was admirably done. One or two of the soft-hearted sailors turned away with tears smarting in their honest eyes at the sight of the father's grief.

"He lives—he lives!" screamed Mr. Wilson—for it was he. "Help me! Brandy—there's brandy on the table! Help me!"

He held his son's head on his knees, while Mr. Handyside poured a few drops of the spirit between the young man's clenched teeth.

Then, drawing a long sigh, young Wilson opened his eyes. "They—they have gone?" he asked faintly. "Father—Norah—"

"Yes, yes—gone! We are safe!" cried Mr. Wilson. "Sir," he added, looking up into Mr. Handyside's sympathetic face, "that villain Kester felled my poor son with a cruel blow. Ah, I thought he had killed him! There were only we three left. My black cowards fled at the first approach of the pirates. They struck my poor girl, my niece—see the bruise on her cheek—and bound her hands.

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Another Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.

Have you caught them all, sir? I pray that you have. They have been the terror of my life."

"I am afraid they have got off—most of them," said Mr. Handyside.

"Have you not captured one alive?" asked Mr. Wilson earnestly.

"Not one."

"Ah!"

It certainly sounded like a sigh of relief, though it might have been one of disappointment.

Meanwhile, one of the sailors, with rough kindness and a gentleness strange in one of his burly build and giant frame, was bathing Norah's head with some cold water he had taken from a jug.

Presently the girl's eyes opened, and she looked up into the faces of the men around her.

"You have come in time," she whispered—"in time to save him?"

"Yes, yes—in time!" said Mr. Wilson hurriedly.

He bent over his niece as he spoke, and his eyes burned into hers—eyes that were filled with threat.

With a shuddering sigh, the girl fell back, and lay silent.

"And now drink this," said Mr. Handyside, pouring out a glass of brandy, and handing it to the planter. "Drink this, sir. It will give you strength. I fear that you must have had a terrible experience."

"Terrible—terrible, indeed!" said the old scoundrel, taking the glass with his shaking hands.

He drank down the spirit, and seemed relieved.

Meanwhile, Joseph Wilson, who had been assisted into a chair by one of the sailors, lay back with closed eyes.

"I will tell you all that there is to tell," said the elder man. "Early this afternoon two vessels dropped anchor in the bay to the east of the island. Both were schooners, and I instantly recognised in one as the Rattler, and the other the Albatross. The sight of the two vessels spread terror and consternation amongst my blacks. They fled, and hid themselves in the woods and fields. I knew what villains it was that manned these two vessels, but I did not think that they would molest me. For some hours they made no move to come on shore, and then, to my unspeakable delight and relief, I saw your vessel, the frigate, approach the island from the other side, and drop her anchor. I at once went up to the roof, and fired off some signals. Perhaps you did not notice them, for they were not answered."

"We did see them, but did not think they were intended for us," said Mr. Handyside.

"Then who for but yourselves? You did not think that I would signal to those wretches?" asked Mr. Wilson.

"I—I confess that we did," said Mr. Handyside, looking rather ashamed of himself. "Our captain thought that the signals were intended for the pirates—indeed, the sight of them first aroused our suspicion that the pirates were here."

"Ah, then they were not thrown away, after all, since it has brought you to my aid. No sooner had I fired the signals than three boats put off from the schooners in the bay, and some twenty or thirty of the scoundrelly pirates landed, and marched up here to the house. Had my negroes remained faithful, I should have defended the house against them; but what could we do, an old man and a young girl, against thirty armed and desperate villains, who knew neither mercy nor pity? They entered unmolested, and forced me to wait on them. You will see, sir, the glasses that they used, the bottles they have emptied."

Mr. Wilson pointed to the table, still littered with the remains of the feast.

"Then your brave men landed on the island, and fired at the house. Instantly the pirates turned on us in a fury, thinking that we had deceived them. Even that young girl was not safe from their brutish fury. They struck her down. One of them, the leader, felled my son to the earth with a furious blow from the butt-end of his pistol; two flung themselves on me, and bound me hand and foot, as you found

me. Then they rushed out of the house, and, sitting here, helpless, I heard the sound of firing going on outside. That is all I can tell you, sir. It has been a terrible experience."

"Indeed, it must have been," said Mr. Handyside sympathetically. "I may tell you now, sir, that, unfortunately, you were suspected of being in league with these pirates. The occurrences of to-night, however, have had one good effect. After the treatment you have received from their hands, your character is vindicated."

"It is indeed cruel that I should be suspected of favouring these men, who have been a terror to me. I am a peaceful planter, sir, and all I ask is to be allowed to lead a quiet and peaceful life."

"Begging your pardon, sir, it seems to be as there's something a-moving in the cupboard yonder," said one of the sailors at this moment.

"In that cupboard?" said Mr. Wilson quickly. "Ah, yes, I remember!"

Young Wilson opened his eyes, and fixed them, with a horrified look, on his father's face. Norah, too, looked towards him; but the old man seemed to be unconscious of their scrutiny.

"Yes," he said slowly, "I remember. I shut my dog in there. He is a very valuable and faithful animal, but very savage with strangers. I knew that he would at once attack the pirates, and I dreaded lest he should be killed, so I locked him in there out of harm's way."

The sailor, who had approached the door, stood irresolute. "D'ye think he'd attack us, mister?" he asked.

"I fear he would. He is very savage, indeed. It would be better to leave him where he is," said Mr. Wilson unconcernedly.

"You had better leave the dog alone, if you don't want to be bitten, Frant," said Mr. Handyside. "There is a very good proverb, 'Let sleeping dogs lie,' " he added, with a laugh.

"He is safe there, and out of harm's way. I am fond of the creature, or I would have destroyed him long ago, as he is quite untameable," said Mr. Wilson. "Gentlemen, may I hope that you will honour my humble roof to-night? All that I have is at your disposal."

"I thank you for your hospitality, sir; but I must return on board, and report at once. If those pirates are still in sight when the dawn breaks, we shall start in chase of them. If not, we shall probably see you again before leaving this island."

They shook hands very cordially and went, not before Mr. Wilson had insisted on each of the men having a good stiff glass of brandy apiece.

"A proper sort!" muttered one.

"I am afraid we have done him an injustice. He is evidently quite innocent of aiding those pirates," thought Mr. Handyside.

As soon as the sailors had gone, Joseph Wilson, with an agility strange in one so recently recovered from a serious injury, sprang to his feet.

"Phew! A close thing!" he muttered. "Thunder and lightning! I wish I had your cool head!" he added, with a look of admiration towards his father.

"That you'll never have, I'm afraid," said old Wilson, chuckling at his own cleverness.

Joseph nodded his head towards the cupboard.

"And what about the—the dog in there? A savage brute like that ought to be killed and buried without any delay—eh? He's dangerous to us."

Joseph took his knife out, and felt its keen edge with fiendish deliberation; then, with a glance towards the girl on the sofa, he approached the door of the cupboard.

But in an instant Norah had sprung to her feet, and, springing across the room, planted her back against the door.

"Out of the way!" said her cousin fiercely. "Out of the way—"

(This thrilling serial story will be continued in next Thursday's issue of THE GEM LIBRARY.)

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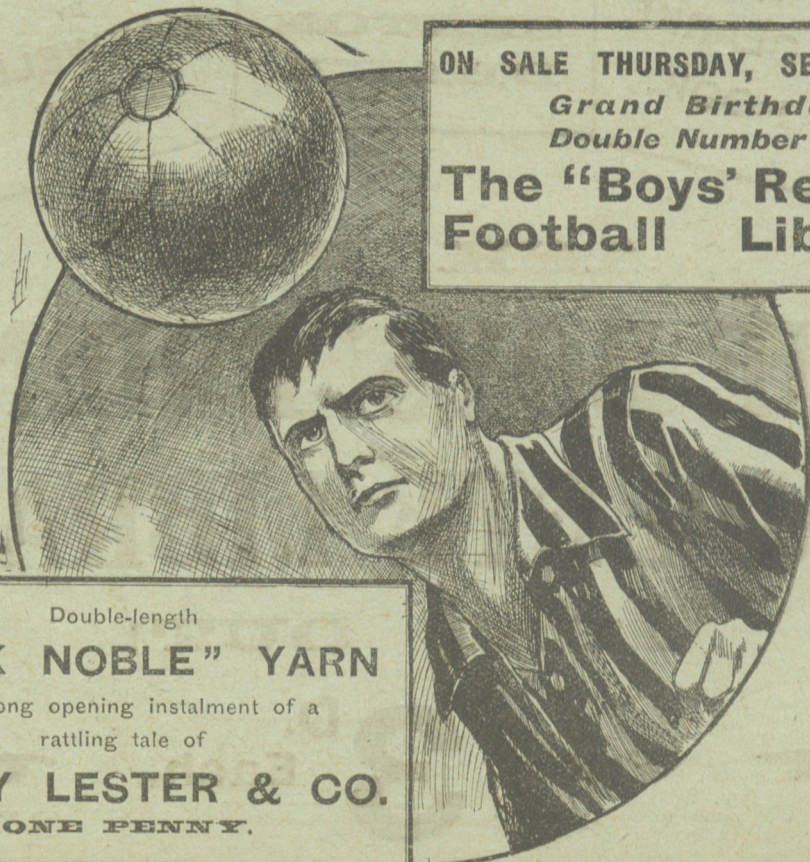
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